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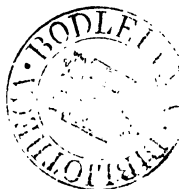
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**Edmund Spenser's**  
**KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSS;**  
OR  
**HOLINESS.**

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THE ANTIQUE SPELLING IS MODERNIZED;  
THE PUNCTUATION IS RECTIFIED;  
OBSOLETE WORDS ARE DISPLACED BY THOSE NOW IN USE;  
OR, WHERE NECESSARILY RETAINED, THE MEANING IS GIVEN;  
A KEY TO THE INTERPRETATION IS ALSO FURNISHED:  
THE WHOLE OF THIS NOBLE POEM  
IS THUS RENDERED INTELLIGIBLE TO EVERY READER.

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"A VERSE MAY FIND HIM, WHO A SERMON FLIES."

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## THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

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EDMUND SPENSER was one of the earliest, and is acknowledged by all to have been one of the best, of our English poets. *THE KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSS* is the first book of his *FAIRY QUEEN*: but it is also a complete poem in itself. It is an allegory, the imagery of which is borrowed partly from the exploits of chivalry, and partly from the supposed habits of fairies. It is entitled to rank with that master-piece of allegorical composition, the *PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*. Indeed, as SPENSER's works were read extensively and with great avidity in the seventeenth century, it is no improbable supposition that BUNYAN's wonderful genius for communicating religious instruction under the fascinating guise of allegorical narrative was fostered by the perusal of them. Moreover, the germs of BUNYAN's *PILGRIM* are found in the *REDCROSS KNIGHT*. In one respect SPENSER surpasses BUNYAN: he combines the charms of poetry with the fertile ingenuity of allegory.

We have no hesitation in saying of the *REDCROSS KNIGHT*, that, for the thrilling interest which it awakens, for the striking pictorial descriptions with which it abounds, for its high poetical merits, and withal for its adaptation to strengthen in the minds of men a just abhorrence of Popery, and a firm attachment to British Protestant Christianity, it is worthy to be placed by the side of BUNYAN's *PILGRIM*, on the library shelf of every cottage throughout the land.

### KEY TO THE INTERPRETATION.

CANTO I, II.—The design of the poem is to illustrate and recommend Christian holiness. The *REDCROSS KNIGHT* represents Christianity generally, or the Christian personally, equipped in the whole armour of God, as described by Saint Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians. *UNA* is divine truth, whose cause the knight has espoused, and whose wrongs he has undertaken to redress. *GLORIANA*, at whose instigation he enters upon this enterprise, is primarily and properly heavenly glory; though sometimes the title is applied, in courtly adulation, to Queen Elizabeth, to whom the poet dedicated his work. The first encounter of the knight is with Error, a monster whom he destroys with all her offspring. *ARCHIMAGO* is Satan, as a deceiver. In the garb of a hermit, he inveigles the knight, and succeeds by magical devices in inducing him to abandon *UNA*. The Church, after its first triumphs, gradually become dissatisfied with the simplicity of primitive truth, and parted therefrom. The adoption of Popish principles and rites, from pre-existent systems of heathenism, which Christianity superseded, is represented by the knight overcoming *SANS FOY*, pagan unbelief, and receiving to his favour *DUSSA*, duplicity or falsehood, under the assumed name of *FIDESSA*, faith. The episode of *FRADUBIO* and *FRELISSA* exhibits the wretched plight of such as vacillate between Protestantism and Popery; persons brought up in Protestant principles but going over in a greater or less degree to Popery; a class of people, always found in this country ever since the Reformation, and, in these days, commonly designated Puseyites.



CANTO III.—The Lion is the representation of kingly authority, by which Protestant truth was upheld and defended at the Reformation, both in our own and other countries. In the death of KIRKRAPINS we see this royal authority abolishing the monasteries. But as the cause of truth was not to depend for its protection on such a power, the poet, with singular sagacity, and almost prophetic foresight, indicates the destruction, in its turn, of civil despotism, by an insurrectionary lawless democracy, personated in SANS LOY, without law. He also vividly depicts the danger to which the cause of truth is subjected, when democratic influences gain the ascendancy.

CANTO IV, V.—The poet's description of LUCIFERA, her palace, her equipage, and her attendants, has always been greatly admired, both for its truthfulness and its bold pencilling. The lesson is that Popery surrounds the self-denying religion of the meek and lowly Jesus with the glittering attractions of worldly pomp and splendour. SANS JOY, the third son of old AYSUGLE, or Blindman, as Bunyan would call him, is appropriately met with here; for utterly devoid of all true joy are the votaries of pride. The knight, on becoming acquainted, through the medium of his dwarf, the personification of watchfulness, with the horrors of the dungeon in which the thralls of the haughty princess were held captive, is urged by fear to make his escape.

CANTO VI.—Probably the design of this Canto is to shew the mingled sentiments of admiration and superstitious awe, with which Christian truth was received by the barbarous nations of Europe, in the middle ages. SATYRANS seems to be the type of that rude but lofty-minded chivalry which sprung up in those nations; and his contest with the Saracen is perhaps an allusion to the crusades.

CANTO VII, VIII, IX.—ORGOGGIO, from an Italian word signifying pride, personifies those tyrannical governments of Europe, by which Popery has been for centuries patronized and sustained; and the beast on which he set DUESSA is the secular power of the Papedom. Protestant Christianity is oppressed by those governments, and its professors persecuted and crushed. ARTHUR, who befriends UNA in her extremity, and liberates the knight, is British magnanimity exerting its resistless might to put down all intolerance, to withstand the tyranny of Rome, and to secure full religious freedom. His squire is the gospel ministry; and the wondrous bugle is the preaching of evangelical doctrine. The knight, after his deliverance, is well nigh overcome by the sophistries of despair, but is extricated by truth.

CANTO X, XI, XII.—The knight, being greatly strengthened and improved by the entertainment he receives in the house of holiness, goes forth to his final conflict with the great dragon. How graphic and striking is the description of the monster! It need scarcely be stated that he is the image of Satan, as the destroyer. The struggle is fierce and protracted; but the adversary being vanquished, and the human race disenthralled, the alliance of Christianity with eternal truth is celebrated amidst general rejoicings.

WILLIAM HORTON.

EDINBURGH, July, 1850.

# THE

## KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSS ; OR, HOLINESS.

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Lo ! I, the man whose muse erewhile did mask,  
As time her taught, in lowly shepherd's weeds,  
Am now enforced, a far unfitter task,  
For trumpets stern to change mine oaten reeds,  
And sing of knights and ladies gentle deeds ;  
Whose praises, having slept in silence long,  
Me, all too mean, the sacred muse areads [commands]  
To blazen broad amongst her learned throng :  
Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralize my song.

Help then, O holy virgin, chief of nine,  
Thy weaker novice to perform thy will ;  
Lay forth out of thine everlasting shrine  
The antique rolls, which there lie hidden still,  
Of fairy knights, and fairest Tanaquill,  
Whom that most noble British prince so long  
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,  
That I must rue his undeserved wrong :  
O help thou my weak wit, and sharpen my dull tongue.

And thou, dread progeny of highest Jove,  
Fair Venus' son, that, with thy cruel dart,  
At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,  
That glorious fire it kindled in his heart ;  
Lay now thy deadly ebon bow apart,  
And, with thy mother mild, come to mine aid ;  
Come, both ; and with you bring triumphant Mart,  
In loves and gentle jollities arrayed,  
After his murderous spoils, and bloody rage allayed.

And with them too, O goddess heavenly bright,  
Mirror of grace and majesty divine,  
Great lady of the greatest isle, whose light  
Like Phœbus' lamp throughout the world doth shine,  
Shed thy fair beams upon my feeble eyne. [eyes]  
And raise my thoughts, too humble and too vile,  
To think of that true glorious type of thine,  
The argument of mine afflicted style :  
The which to hear vouchsafe, O dearest dread, awhile.

## CANTO I.

The patron of true holiness,  
 Foul error doth defeat ;  
 Hypocrisy, him to entrap,  
 Doth to his home entreat.

A GENTLE knight was prancing on the plain,  
 Arrayed in mighty arms and silver shield,  
 Wherein old dints of deep wounds did remain,  
 The cruel marks of many a bloody field ;  
 Yet arms till that time did he never wield :  
 His angry steed did chide his foaming bit,  
 As much disdaining to the curb to yield :  
 Full jolly knight he seemed, and fair did sit,  
 As one for knightly jousts and fierce encounters fit.

And on his breast a bloody cross he bore,  
 The dear remembrance of his dying Lord,  
 For whose sweet sake that glorious badge he wore,  
 And dead, as living, ever him ador'd :  
 Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,  
 For sovereign hope, which in his help he had ;  
 Right faithful, true, he was in deed and word :  
 But did in aspect seem too solemn sad ;  
 Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad. [dreaded]

Upon a great adventure he was bound,  
 Which greatest GLORIANA to him gave,  
 That greatest glorious Queen of Fairyland,  
 To win him worship, and her grace to have,  
 Which of all earthly things he did most crave :  
 And ever as he rode, his heart did yearn  
 To prove his puissance in battle brave  
 Upon his foe, and his new force to learn ;  
 Upon his foe, a dragon horrible and stern.

A lovely lady rode him fair beside,  
 Upon a lowly ass more white than snow,  
 Yet she much whiter ; but the same did hide  
 Under a veil, that flowed down full low ;  
 And over all a black robe she did throw,  
 As one that inly mourned ; so was she sad,  
 And heavy sat upon her palfrey slow ;  
 Seemed in heart some hidden care she had ;  
 And by her in a line a milk-white lamb she lad. [led]

So pure and innocent, as that same lamb,  
 She was in life and every virtuous lore ;  
 And by decent from royal lineage came  
 Of ancient kings and queens, that had of yore  
 Their sceptres stretched from east to western shore,  
 And all the world in their subjection held ;  
 Till that infernal fiend with foul uproar  
 Much wasted all their land, and them expelled ;  
 Whom to avenge she had this knight from far compelled.

Behind her far away a dwarf did lag,  
 That lazy seemed, in being ever last,  
 Or wearied with bearing of her bag  
 Of needments at his back. Thus as they past,  
 The day with clouds was suddenly o'ercast ;  
 And angry Jove a hideous storm of rain  
 Did pour upon the wide champaign so fast,  
 That every man to shelter did constrain ;  
 And this fair couple too to shroud themselves were fain.

Enforced to seek some covert nigh at hand,  
 A shady grove not far away they spied,  
 That promised aid the tempest to withstand ;  
 Whose lofty trees, beclad in summer's pride,  
 Did spread so broad, that heaven's light did hide,  
 Not pervious to the power of any star ;  
 And all within were paths and alleys wide,  
 With footing worn, and leading inward far :  
 Fair harbour that, it seems ; so in they entered are.

And forth they pass, with pleasure forward led,  
 Joying to hear the birds' sweet harmony,  
 Which, therein shrouded from the tempest dread,  
 Seemed in their song to scorn the cruel sky.  
 Much do they praise the trees so straight and high ;  
 The sailing pine ; the cedar proud and tall ;  
 The vine-prop elm ; the poplar never dry ;  
 The builder oak, sole king of forests all ;  
 The aspen, good for staves ; the cypress funeral ;

The laurel, meed of mighty conquerors  
 And poets sage ; the fir that weepeth still ;  
 The willow, worn of forlorn paramours ;  
 The yew, obedient to the bender's will ;  
 The birch for shafts ; the sallow for the mill ;  
 The myrrh, sweet-bleeding in the bitter wound ;  
 The warlike beech ; the ash for nothing ill ;  
 The fruitful olive ; and the plane-tree round ;  
 The carver holm ; the maple, seldom inward sound.

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,  
 Until the blustering storm is overblown ;  
 When, wishing to return, whence they did stray,  
 They cannot find that path which first was shewn,  
 But wander to and fro in ways unknown ;  
 Furthest from end then, when they nearest wean, [think]  
 That makes them doubt their wits be not their own :  
 So many paths, so many turnings seen,  
 That which of them to take, in diverse doubt they been.

At last, resolving forward still to fare,  
 Till that some end they find, or in or out,  
 That path they take that beaten seemed most bare,  
 And like to lead the labyrinth about ;  
 Which when by track they hunted had throughout,  
 At length it brought them to a hollow cave  
 Amidst the thickest woods. The champion stout  
 Forthwith dismounted from his courser brave,  
 And to the dwarf awhile his needless spear he gave.

‘ Be well aware,’ quoth then that lady mild,  
 ‘ Lest sudden mischief you too rash provoke ;  
 ‘ The danger hid, the place unknown and wild,  
 ‘ Breeds dreadful doubts : oft fire is without smoke,  
 ‘ And peril without shew ; therefore your stroke,  
 ‘ Sir knight, withhold, till further trial made.’  
 ‘ Ah lady,’ said he, ‘ shame were to revoke,  
 ‘ The forward footing for a hidden shade :  
 ‘ Virtue gives herself light through darkness for to wade.’

‘ Yea, but,’ quoth she, ‘ the peril of this place  
 ‘ I better know than you : though now too late  
 ‘ To wish you back return with foul disgrace,  
 ‘ Yet wisdom warns while foot is in the gate,  
 ‘ To stay the step, ere forced to retreat.  
 ‘ This is the Wandering Wood, this ERROR’s Den,  
 ‘ A monster vile, whom God and man do hate :  
 ‘ Therefore I say beware.’ ‘ Fly, fly,’ quoth then  
 The fearful dwarf, ‘ this is no place for living men.’

But, full of fire and greedy hardiment,  
 The youthful knight could not for aught be stayed ;  
 But forth unto the darksome hole he went,  
 And looked in ; his glistening armour made  
 A little glooming light, much like a shade ;  
 By which he saw the ugly monster plain,  
 Half like a serpent horribly display’d,  
 But th’ other half did woman’s shape retain ;  
 Most loathsome, filthy, foul, and full of vile disdain.

And as she lay upon the dirty ground,  
 Her huge long tail her den all overspread,  
 Yet was in knots and many folds upwound,  
 Pointed with mortal sting ; of her there bred  
 A thousand young ones, which she daily fed,  
 Sucking upon her poisonous dugs ; each one  
 Of sundry shapes, yet all ill-favoured :  
 Soon as that unknown light upon them shone,  
 Into her mouth they crept, and suddenly were gone.

Their dam upstarted from her den afraid,  
 And rushed forth, hurling her hideous tail  
 About her cursed head ; whose folds display'd  
 Were now stretch'd forth at length without entrail. [twist]  
 She looked about, and seeing one in mail,  
 Armed to point, sought back to turn again :  
 For light she hated as the deadly bale, [evil]  
 Aye wont in desert darkness to remain,  
 Where plain none might her see, nor she see any plain.

Which when the valiant knight perceived, he leap'd,  
 As lion fierce, upon the flying prey,  
 And with his trenchant blade her boldly kept  
 From turning back, and forced her to stay :  
 Therewith enraged, she loudly gan to bray,  
 And turning fierce, her speckled tail advanced,  
 Threatening her angry sting, him to dismay ;  
 Who, nought aghast, his mighty hand enhanced ;  
 The stroke down from her head unto her shoulder glanced.

Much daunted with that dint, her sense was dazed ; [confused]  
 Yet kindling rage, herself she gathered round,  
 And all at once her beastly body raised -  
 With doubled forces high above the ground ;  
 Then, wrapping up her wreathed tail around,  
 Leap'd fierce upon his shield, and her huge train  
 All suddenly about his body wound,  
 That hand or foot to stir he strove in vain.  
 God help the man so wrapt in Error's endless train !

His lady, sad to see his sore constraint,  
 Cried out, ' Now, now, sir knight, shew what ye be ;  
 ' Add faith unto your force, and be not faint ;  
 ' Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee.'  
 That when he heard, in great perplexity,  
 His gall did grate for grief and high disdain ;  
 And knitting all his force, got one hand free,  
 Wherewith he gripp'd her gorge with so great pain,  
 That soon to loose her wicked bands did her constrain.

Therewith she spewed out of her filthy maw  
 A flood of poison horrible and black,  
 Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw,  
 Which stunk so vilely, that it forced him slack!  
 His grasping hold, and from her turn him back :  
 Her vomit full of books and papers was,  
 With loathsome frogs and toads, which eyes did lack,  
 And creeping sought way in the weedy grass :  
 Her filthy vomit all the place defiled has.

'As when old father Nilus gins to swell  
 With timely pride above the Egyptian vale,  
 His fatty waves do fertile slime outwell,  
 And overflow each plain and lowly dale :  
 But, when his later spring gins to avale, [subside]  
 Huge heaps of mud he leaves, wherein there breed  
 Ten thousand kinds of creatures, partly male,  
 And partly female, of his fruitful seed ;  
 Such ugly monstrous shapes elsewhere may no man read.

The same so sorely has annoyed the knight,  
 That, well nigh choked with the deadly stink,  
 His forces fail ; he can no longer fight.  
 Whose courage when the fiend perceived to shrink,  
 She poured forth, out of her hellish sink,  
 Her fruitful cursed spawn of serpents small ;  
 Deformed monsters, foul, and black as ink,  
 Which swarming all about his legs did crawl,  
 And him encumbered sore, but could not hurt at all.

As gentle shepherd, in sweet eventide,  
 When ruddy Phœbus gins to sink in west,  
 High on a hill, his flock to view full wide,  
 Marks which do bite their hasty supper best,  
 A cloud of cumbrous gnats do him molest,  
 All striving to infix their feeble stings,  
 That from th' annoyance he no where can rest ;  
 But with his clownish hands their tender wings  
 He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings :

Thus ill bested, and fearful more of shame  
 Than of the certain peril he stood in,  
 Half furious unto his foe he came,  
 Resolved in mind all suddenly to win,  
 Or soon to lose, before he would give in ;  
 And struck at her with more than manly force,  
 That from her body, full of filthy sin,  
 He reft her hateful head without remorse :  
 A stream of coal-black blood forth gushed from her corse.

Her scattered brood, soon as their parent dear  
 They saw so rudely falling to the ground,  
 Groaning full deadly all with troublous fear,  
 Gathered themselves about her body round,  
 Weening their wonted entrance to have found  
 At her wide mouth ; but, being there withstood,  
 They flocked all about her bleeding wound,  
 And sucked up their dying mother's blood ;  
 Making her death their life, her hurt their present good.

That sight detestable him much amazed,  
 To see the unkindly imps, of heaven accurst,  
 Devour their dam ; on which while so he gazed,  
 Having all satisfied their bloody thirst,  
 Their bellies swoln he saw with fulness burst,  
 And bowels gushing forth : well worthy end  
 Of such as drunk her life, the which them nurs'd :  
 Now needeth him no longer labour spend,  
 His foes have slain themselves, with whom he should contend.

His lady, seeing all that chanced from far,  
 Approached in haste to greet his victory,  
 And said, ' Fair knight, born under happy star,  
 ' Who see your vanquished foes before you lie,  
 ' Well worthy be you of that armory,  
 ' Wherein you have great glory won this day,  
 ' And proved your strength on a strong enemy ;  
 ' Your first adventure : many such, I pray,  
 ' And henceforth ever wish, that like succeed they may.'

Then mounted he upon his steed again,  
 And with the lady backward sought to wend :  
 That path he kept, which beaten was most plain,  
 Nor ever would to any bye-way bend ;  
 But still did follow one unto the end,  
 The which at last out of the wood them brought.  
 So forward on his way, with God to friend,  
 He passed forth, and new adventure sought :  
 Long way he travelled, before he heard of aught.

At length they chanced to meet upon the way  
 An aged sire, in long black weeds beclad,  
 His feet all bare, his beard all hoary gray,  
 And by his belt his book he hanging had ;  
 Sober he seemed, and very sagely sad ;  
 And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,  
 Simple in show, and void of malice bad ;  
 And all the way he prayed as he went,  
 And often knock'd his breast, as one that did repent.



He fair the knight saluted, bowing low,  
 Who fair requited, as that courteous was ;  
 And after asked him, if he did know  
 Of strange adventures, which abroad did pass.  
 ' Ah, my dear son,' quoth he, ' how should, alas !  
 ' Silly old man, that lives in hidden cell,  
 ' Telling his beads all day for his trespass.  
 ' Tidings of war and worldly trouble tell ?  
 ' With holy father sits not with such things to mell.' [meddle]  
  
 ' But if of danger, which hereby doth dwell,  
 ' And home-bred evil, ye desire ~~to~~ hear,  
 ' Of a strange man I can you tidings tell,  
 ' That wasteth all this country far and near.'  
 ' Of such,' said he, ' I chiefly do inquire ;  
 ' And shall thee well reward to shew the place,  
 ' In which that wicked wight his days doth wear :  
 ' For to all knighthood it is foul disgrace,  
 ' That such a cursed creature lives so long a space.'  
  
 ' Far hence,' quoth he, ' in wasteful wilderness  
 ' His dwelling is, by which no living wight  
 ' May ever pass, but all through great distress.'  
 ' Now,' said the lady, ' draweth toward the night ;  
 ' And well I wot that by your later fight  
 ' You greatly wearied are ; for what so strong,  
 ' But, wanting rest, will also want of might ?  
 ' The sun, that measures heaven all day long,  
 ' At night doth bait his steeds the ocean waves among.'  
  
 ' Then with the sun take, sir, your timely rest,  
 ' And with new day new works at once begin :  
 ' Untroubled night, they say, gives counsel best.'  
 ' Right well, sir knight, ye have advised been,'  
 Quoth then that aged man, ' the way to win  
 ' Is wisely to advise. Now day is spent :  
 ' Therefore with me ye may take up your in  
 ' For this same night.' The knight was well content :  
 So with that godly father to his home they went.

A little lowly hermitage it was,  
 Down in a dale, hard by a forest's side,  
 Far from resort of people, that did pass  
 In travel to and fro : a little wide  
 There was a holy chapel edified,  
 Wherein the hermit duly wont to say  
 His holy things each morn and eventide :  
 Thereby a crystal stream did gently play,  
 Which from a sacred fountain welled forth alway.

Arrived there the little house they fill,  
 Nor look for entertainment where none was ;  
 Rest is their feast, and all things at their will :  
 The noblest mind the best contentment has.  
 With fair discourse the evening so they pass ;  
 For that old man of pleasing words had store,  
 And well could file his tongue as smooth as glass ;  
 He told of saints and popes, and evermore  
 He strewed an Ave-Mary after and before.

The drooping night thus creepeth on them fast ;  
 And the sad humour loading their eye-lids,  
 As messenger of Morpheus on them cast  
 Sweet slumbering dew, the which to sleep them bids.  
 Unto their lodgings then his guests he rides :  
 Where when all drowned in deadly sleep he finds,  
 He to his study goes ; and there amidst  
 His magic books, and arts of sundry kinds,  
 He seeks out mighty charms to trouble sleepy minds.

Then choosing out few words most horrible,  
 (Let none them read,) thereof did verses frame :  
 With which, and other spells like terrible,  
 He bade awake black Pluto's grizzly dame ;  
 And cursed heaven ; and spake reproachful shame  
 Of highest God, the Lord of life and light.  
 A bold bad man ! that dared to call by name  
 Great Gorgon, prince of darkness and dead night ;  
 At which Cocytus quakes, and Styx is put to flight.

And forth he called out of deep darkness dread  
 Legions of sprites, the which, like little flies,  
 Fluttering about his ever-damned head,  
 Await whereto their service he applies,  
 To aid his friends, or fray his enemies :  
 Of those he chose out two, the falsest two,  
 And fittest for to forge true-seeming lies ;  
 The one of them he gave a message to,  
 The other by himself stayed other work to do.

He, making speedy way through outspread air,  
 And through the world of waters wide and deep,  
 To Morpheus' house doth hastily repair.  
 Amid the bowels of the earth, full steep  
 And low, where dawning day doth never peep  
 His dwelling is ; there Tethys his wet bed  
 Doth ever wash ; and Cynthia still doth steep  
 In silver dew his ever drooping head ;  
 While sad Night over him her mantle black doth spread ;

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast ;  
 The one fair framed of burnished ivory,  
 The other all with silver overcast ;  
 And wakeful dogs before them far do lie,  
 Watching to banish Care their enemy,  
 Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleep.  
 By them the sprite doth pass in quietly,  
 And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deep  
 In drowsy fit he finds ; of nothing he takes keep.

And more to lull him in his slumber soft,  
 A trickling stream from high rock tumbling down,  
 And ever drizzling rain upon the loft,  
 Mixed with a murmuring wind, much like the sowne [sound]  
 Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swoone. [swoon]  
 No other noise, nor people's troublous cries,  
 As still are wont to annoy the walled town,  
 Might there be heard : but careless Quiet lies  
 Wrap in eternal silence far from enemies.

The messenger approaching to him spake ;  
 But his waste words returned to him vain :  
 So sound he slept that nought might him awake.  
 Then rudely he him thrust, and pushed with pain,  
 Whereat he gan to stretch ; but he again  
 Shook him so hard that forced him to speak.  
 As one then in a dream, whose drier brain  
 Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weak,  
 He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence break.

The sprite began more boldly him to wake,  
 And threatened unto him the dreaded name  
 Of Hecaté ; whereat he gan to quake,  
 And, lifting up his lumpish head, with blame,  
 Half angry, asked him for what he came.  
 ' Hither,' quoth he, ' me ARCHIMAGO sent,  
 ' He that the stubborn sprites can wisely tame,  
 ' He bids thee to him send for his intent  
 ' A fit false Dream, that can delude the sleeper's scent.'

The god obeyed ; and, calling forth straight way  
 A diverse dream out of his prison dark,  
 Delivered it to him, and down did lay  
 His heavy head, devoid of careful cark,  
 Whose senses all were straight benumbed and stark.  
 He, back returning by the ivory door,  
 Remounted up as light as cheerful lark ;  
 And on his little wings the Dream he bore  
 In haste unto his lord, where he him left afore.

Who all this while with charms and hidden arts,  
 Had made a lady of that other sprite,  
 And framed of liquid air her tender parts,  
 So lively, and so like in all men's sight,  
 That weaker sense it could have ravished quite :  
 The maker's self, for all his wondrous wit,  
 Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight.  
 Her all in white he clad, and over it  
 Cast a black robe, most like to seem for UNA fit.

Now when that idle Dream was to him brought,  
 Unto that Redcross knight he bade him fly,  
 Where he slept soundly, void of evil thought,  
 And with false shows abuse his fantasy,  
 In sort as he him schooled privily.  
 The fraudulent sprite, transformed to creature new,  
 Full of the maker's guile, with usage sly  
 He taught to imitate that lady true,  
 Whose semblance she did carry under feigned hue.

Thus, well instructed, to their works they haste ;  
 And coming where the knight in slumber lay,  
 The one upon his hardy head him placed,  
 And made him dream of loves and lustful play,  
 That nigh his manly heart did melt away,  
 Bathed in wanton bliss and wicked joy :  
 Then seemed to him his lady by him lay,  
 And to him plained, how that false winged boy  
 Her chaste heart had subdued to learn dame Pleasure's toy.

And she herself, of beauty sovereign queen,  
 Fair Venus, seemed unto his bed to bring  
 Her, whom he, waking, evermore did ween  
 To be the chastest flower that ere did spring  
 On earthly branch, the daughter of a king ;  
 Now a loose leman to vile service bound :  
 And now the Graces seemed all to sing,  
 HYMEN Io HYMEN, dancing all around ;  
 Whilst freshest Flora her with ivy garland crowned.

In this great passion of unwonted lust,  
 Or wonted fear of doing aught amiss,  
 He starteth up, as seeming to mistrust  
 Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his :  
 Lo, there before his face his lady is,  
 Under black cloak hiding her baited hook ;  
 And, as half blushing, offered him to kiss,  
 With gentle blandishment, and lovely look,  
 Most like that virgin true, who for her knight him took.

Dismayed to see so unexpected sight,  
 And half enraged at her shameless guise,  
 He thought t' have slain her in his fierce despite ;  
 But, hasty heat tempering with suffrance wise,  
 He stayed his hand, and gan himself advise  
 To prove his sense, and test her feigned truth.  
 Wringing her hands, in woman's piteous wise,  
 Then gan she weep, to stir up gentle ruth  
 Both for her noble blood, and for her tender youth ;

And said, ' Ah sir, my liege lord, and my love,  
 ' Shall I accuse the hidden cruel fate,  
 ' And mighty causes wrought in heaven above,  
 ' Or the blind god, that doth me thus amate, [subdue]  
 ' For hoped love to win me certain hate ?  
 ' Yet thus perforce he bids me do or die.  
 ' Death is my due ; yet rue my wretched state,  
 ' You, whom my hard avenging destiny  
 ' Hath made judge of my life or death indifferently :'

' Your own dear sake forced me at first to leave  
 ' My father's kingdom'—there she stopp'd with tears ;  
 Her swollen heart her speech seemed to bereave,  
 And then again begun, ' My weaker years,  
 ' Captiv'd to fortune and frail worldly fears,  
 ' Fly to your faith for succour and sure aid :  
 ' Let me not die in languor and long tears.'  
 ' Why dame,' quoth he, ' what hath ye thus dismayed ?  
 ' What fear ye, that were wont to comfort me afraid ?'

' Love of yourself,' she said, ' and dear constraint,  
 ' Lets me not sleep, but waste the weary night  
 ' In secret anguish and unpitied plaint,  
 ' Whilst you in careless sleep are drowned quite.'  
 Her doubtful words made that redoubted knight  
 Suspect her truth ; yet since n' untruth he knew,  
 Her fawning love with foul disdainful spite  
 He would not blame ; but said, ' Dear dame I rue  
 ' That for my sake unknown such grief unto you grew :'

' Assure yourself, it fell not all to ground ;  
 ' For all so dear as life is to my heart,  
 ' I deem your love, and hold me to you bound :  
 ' Nor let vain fears procure you needless smart  
 ' Where cause is none ; but to your rest depart.'  
 Not all content, yet seemed she to appease  
 Her mournful plaints, beguiled of her art,  
 And fed with words that could not fail to please :  
 So, sliding softly forth, she turned as to her ease.

Long after lay he musing at her mood,  
 Much grieved to think that gentle dame so light,  
 For whose defence he was to shed his blood.  
 At last dull weariness of former fight  
 Having fast rocked asleep his irksome sprite,  
 That troublous Dream gan freshly toss his brain  
 With bowers and beds and ladies' dear delight :  
 But, when he saw his labour all was vain,  
 With that misformed sprite he back returned again.

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## CANTO II.

The guileful great enchanter parts  
 The Redcross knight from Truth :  
 Into whose stead fair Falsehood steps,  
 And works him woeful ruth.

By this the northern waggoner had set  
 His sevenfold team behind the steadfast star,  
 That was in ocean waves yet never wêt,  
 But firm is fixed, and sendeth light from far  
 To all that in the wide deep wandering are :  
 And cheerful chanticler with his note shrill  
 Had warned once, that Phœbus' fiery car  
 In haste was climbing up the eastern hill,  
 Full envious that Night so long his room did fill.

When those accursed messengers of hell,  
 That feigning Dream, and that fair-forged sprite,  
 Came to their wicked master, and did tell  
 Their bootless pains and ill-succeeding night :  
 Who, all in rage to see his skilful might  
 Defeated so, did threaten hellish pain  
 And sad Proserpine's wrath, them to affright.  
 But when he saw his threatening was but vain,  
 He cast about, and searched his baleful books again.

Full soon he took that miscreated fair,  
 And that false other sprite, on whom he spread  
 A seeming body of the subtile air,  
 Like a young squire, in loves and lustyhead  
 His wanton days that ever loosely led,  
 Without regard of arms and dreaded fight :  
 Those two he took, and in a secret bed,  
 Covered with darkness and misdeeming night,  
 Them both together laid, to joy in vain delight.

Forthwith he runs with feigned-faithful haste  
 Unto his guest, who after troublous sights  
 And dreams, began to take more sound repast ;  
 Whom suddenly he wakes with fearful frights,  
 As one aghast with fiends or damned sprites,  
 And to him calls, ' Rise, rise, unhappy swain,  
 ' That here wax old in sleep, whilst wicked wights  
 ' Have knit themselves in Venus' shameful chain,  
 ' Come, see where your false lady doth her honour stain.'

All in amaze, he suddenly did start,  
 With sword in hand, and with the old man went ;  
 Who soon him brought into a secret part,  
 Where that false couple were on amours bent,  
 In pleasures lustful and incontinent :  
 Which when he saw, he burnt with jealous fire ;  
 The eye of reason was with anger blent ; [ blind ]  
 He would have slain them in his furious ire,  
 And hardly was restrained by that aged sire.

Returning to his bed, in torment great,  
 And bitter anguish, at this guilty sight,  
 He could not rest, but did his stout heart eat,  
 And waste his inward gall with deep despite,  
 Weary of life and too long lingering night.  
 At last fair Hesperus in highest sky  
 Had spent his lamp, and brought forth dawning light ;  
 Then up he rose and clad him hastily ;  
 The dwarf him brought his steed : so both away do fly.

Now when the rosy-fingered Morning fair,  
 Weary of aged Tithon's saffron bed,  
 Had spread her purple robe through dewy air ;  
 And the high hills Titan discovered ;  
 The royal virgin shook off drowsyhead :  
 And rising forth out of her baser bower,  
 Looked for her knight, who far away was fled,  
 And for her dwarf, that wont to wait each hour :  
 Then did she wail and weep to see that woful stour. [ trouble ]

And after him she rode with so much speed  
 As her slow beast could make ; but all in vain :  
 For him so far had borne his light-foot steed,  
 Pricked with wrath and fiery fierce disdain,  
 That him to follow was but fruitless pain :  
 Yet she her weary limbs would never rest,  
 But every hill and dale, each wood and plain,  
 Did search, sore grieved in her gentle breast,  
 He so ungently left her, whom she loved best.

But ~~subtle~~ ARCHIMAGO, when his guests  
 He saw divided into double parts,  
 And UNA wandering in woods and forests,  
 (Th' end of his drift,) he praised his devilish arts,  
 That had such might over true-meaning hearts :  
 Yet rests not so, but other means doth make,  
 How he may work unto her further smarts :  
 For her he hated as the hissing snake,  
 And in her many troubles did most pleasure take.

He then devised himself how to disguise ;  
 For by his mighty science he could take  
 As many forms and shapes in seeming wise,  
 As ever Proteus to himself could make ;  
 Sometimes a fowl, sometimes a fish in lake,  
 Now like a fox, now like a dragon fell ;  
 That at himself he oft for fear would quake,  
 And oft would fly away. O who can tell  
 The hidden power of herbs, and might of magic spell ?

But now seemed best the person to put on  
 Of that good knight, his late beguiled guest.  
 In mighty arms he was beclad anon,  
 And silver shield ; upon his coward breast  
 A bloody cross, and on his craven crest  
 A bunch of hairs discoloured diversely.  
 Full jolly knight he seemed and well address ;  
 And when he sat upon his courser free,  
 Saint George himself ye would have deemed him to be.

But he, the knight, whose semblance he did bear,  
 The true Saint George, had wandered far away,  
 Still flying from his thoughts and jealous fear :  
 Will was his guide, and grief led him astray.  
 At last him chanced to meet upon the way  
 A faithless Saracen, all armed to point,  
 In whose great shield was writ, in letters gay,  
 SANS FOY : full large of limb and every joint  
 He was, and cared not for God or man a point.

He had a fair companion of his way,  
 A goodly lady clad in scarlet red,  
 Adorned with gold and pearl of rich assay ;  
 And like a Persian mitre on her head  
 She wore, with crowns and ouches garnished,  
 The which her lavish lovers to her gave :  
 Her wanton palfrey all was overspread  
 With tinsel trappings, woven like a wave,  
 Whose bridle rung with golden bells and bosses brave.



With fair disport, and courting dalliance,  
 She entertained her lover all the way :  
 But when she saw the knight his spear advance,  
 She soon left off her mirth and wanton play,  
 And bade her knight address him to the fray ;  
 His foe was nigh at hand. He, pricked with pride,  
 And hope to win his lady's heart that day,  
 Forth spurred fast ; adown his courser's side  
 The red blood trickling stained the way, as he did ride.

The knight of the Redcross, when him he spied,  
 Spurring so hot with rage dispiteous,  
 Began to couch his spear, and toward ride :  
 Soon meet they both, both fell and furious,  
 That daunted with their forces hideous,  
 Their steeds do stagger, and amazed stand ;  
 And they themselves, too rudely rigorous,  
 Astonied with the stroke of their own hand,  
 Do back rebut, and each to other yieldeth land.

As when two rams, stirr'd with ambitious pride,  
 Fight for the rule of the rich-fleeced flock,  
 Their horned fronts so fierce on either side  
 Do meet, that, with the terror of the shock,  
 Astonied, both stand senseless as a block,  
 Forgetful of the hanging victory :  
 So stood these twain, unmoved as a rock,  
 Both staring fierce, and holding idly  
 The broken relics of their former cruelty.

The Saracen, sore daunted with the buff,  
 Snatcheth his sword, and fiercely at him flies ;  
 Who well it wards, and quitteth cuff with cuff :  
 Each th' other's equal puissance envies,  
 And through the iron mail with cruel spies  
 Does seek to pierce ; repining courage yields  
 No foot to foe ; the flashing fire flies,  
 As from a forge, out of their burning shields ;  
 And streams of purple blood now dye the verdant fields.

' Curse on that cross,' quoth then the Saracen,  
 ' That keeps thy body from the fateful hit :  
 ' Dead long ago, I wot, thou would'st have been,  
 ' Had not that charm from thee well warned it ;  
 ' But yet I warn thee now. Assured sit,  
 ' And hide thy head.' Therewith upon his crest,  
 With rigour so outrageously he smit,  
 That a large share it hewed out of the rest ; [guarded]  
 But glancing down, his shield from hurt him fairly blest.

Who, thereat wondrous wroth, the sleeping spark  
 Of native courage doth at once revive ;  
 And, at his haughty helmet making mark,  
 So fiercely struck, that it the steel did rive,  
 And cleft the head : he, tumbling down alive,  
 With bloody mouth his mother earth did kiss,  
 Greeting his grave : his grudging ghost did strive  
 With the frail flesh : at last it flitted is,  
 Whither the souls do fly of men that live amiss.

The lady, when she saw her champion fall,  
 Like the old ruins of a broken tower,  
 Stayed not to wail his woeful funeral,  
 But from him fled away with all her power ;  
 The victor knight did after her fast scour,  
 Bidding the dwarf with him to bring away  
 The Pagan's shield, sign of the conqueror ;  
 Her soon he overtook, and bade to stay ;  
 For present cause of dread was none her to dismay.

She, turning back, with rueful countenance,  
 Cried, ' Mercy, mercy, sir, vouchsafe to shew  
 ' On silly dame, subject to hard mischance,  
 ' And to your mighty will.' She humbly low,  
 In so rich weeds and seeming glorious show,  
 Did much enmove his stout heroic heart.  
 He said, ' Dear dame, your sudden overthrow  
 ' Much grieveth me ; but now put fear apart,  
 ' And tell, both who ye be, and who that took your part.'

Then thus, in tears, began she to lament ;  
 ' The wretched woman, whom unhappy hour  
 ' Hath now made thrall to your commandment,  
 ' Before the angry heavens chose to lower,  
 ' And fortune false betrayed me to your power,  
 ' Was—O what now availeth that I was !  
 ' Born the sole daughter of an emperor ;  
 ' He that the wide west under his rule has,  
 ' And high hath set his throne where Tiber's stream doth pass.'

' He, in the first flower of my freshest age,  
 ' Betrothed me unto the only heir  
 ' Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage ;  
 ' Was never prince so faithful and so fair !  
 ' Was never prince so meek and debonaire !  
 ' But, ere my hoped day of spousals shone,  
 ' My dearest lord fell from high honour's stair  
 ' Into the hands of his accursed fone, [foes]  
 ' And cruelly was slain ; that shall I ever moan.

' His blessed body, spoiled of living breath,  
 ' Was afterward, I know not how, conveyed.  
 ' And from me hid ; of whose most innocent death,  
 ' When tidings came to me, unhappy maid,  
 ' O how great sorrow my sad soul dismayed !  
 ' Then went I forth his woeful corse to find,  
 ' And many years throughout the world I strayed,  
 ' A virgin widow ; whose deep-wounded mind  
 ' With love long time did languish, as the stricken hind.  
 ' At last it chanced to this proud Paynim  
 ' To meet me wandering ; who perforce me led  
 ' With him away ; but yet could never win  
 ' The fort, that ladies hold in sovereign dread.  
 ' There lies he now, with foul dishonour, dead,  
 ' Who, whilst he lived, was called proud SANSFOY,  
 ' The eldest of three brethren ; all three bred  
 ' Of one bad sire, whose youngest is SANSJOY ;  
 ' And twixt them both was born the bloody bold SANSLOY.'

' In this sad plight, friendless, unfortunate,  
 ' Now miserable I FINESSA dwell,  
 ' Craving of you, in pity of my state,  
 ' To do no ill, if please ye not do well.'  
 He in great passion all this while did dwell ;  
 More busy were his eyes her face to view,  
 Than his dull ears to hear what she did tell ;  
 He said, ' Fair lady, heart of flint would rue  
 ' The undeserved woes and sorrows, which ye shew.'

' Henceforth in safe assurance may ye rest,  
 ' Having both found a new friend you to aid,  
 ' And lost an old foe that did you molest :  
 ' Better new friend than old foe, it is said.'  
 With change of cheer, the seeming-simple maid  
 Let fall her eyes, as shamefaced, to the earth,  
 And yielded soft, in that she nought gainsaid.  
 So forth they rode, he feigning seemly mirth,  
 And she coy looks : so dainty, they say, maketh dearth.

Long time they thus together travelled ;  
 Till, weary of their way, they came at last  
 Where grew two goodly trees, that fair did spread  
 Their arms abroad, with gray moss overcast ;  
 And their green leaves, trembling with every blast,  
 Made a calm shadow far in compass round :  
 The fearful shepherd, often there aghast,  
 ' Under them never sat, nor would there sound  
 ' Merry oaten pipe, but shunned the unlucky ground.

But this good knight, soon as he them did spy,  
 For the cool shade hastily thither got ;  
 For golden Phœbus, being mounted high,  
 From fiery wheels of his fair chariot  
 Hurl'd his beams so cruel scorching hot,  
 That living creature could it not abide,  
 And his new lady it endured not.  
 There they alight, in hope themselves to hide  
 From the fierce heat, and rest their weary limbs a tide. [awhile]

Fair complaisance each to the other makes,  
 And good discourse maintain, there as they sit;  
 And, in his foolish fancy, he her takes  
 To be the fairest form that lived yet ;  
 Which to express he bends his gentle wit ;  
 And, thinking of those branches green to frame  
 A garland for her dainty forehead fit,  
 He plucked a bough ; out of whose reft there came  
 Small drops of gory blood, that trickled down the same.

Therewith a piteous yelling voice was heard,  
 Crying, ' O spare with guilty hands to tear  
 ' My tender sides, in this rough rind embarr'd ;  
 ' But fly, ah, fly far hence away, for fear  
 ' Lest to you hap what happened to me here,  
 ' And to this wretched lady, my dear love,  
 ' O too dear love, love bought with death too dear !'  
 Aghast he stood, and up his hair did hove ;  
 And, with that sudden horror, could no member move.

At last, when once the dreadful passion  
 Was overpast, and manhood well awake ;  
 Yet musing at the strange occasion,  
 And doubting much his sense, he thus bespake ;  
 ' What voice of damned ghost from Limbo lake,  
 ' Or guileful sprite wandering in empty air,  
 ' Both which frail men do oftentimes mistake,  
 ' Sends to my doubtful ears these speeches rare  
 ' And rueful complaints, me bidding guiltless blood to spare ?'

Then, groaning deep, ' Not damned ghost,' quoth he,  
 ' Nor guileful sprite, to thee these words doth speak,  
 ' But once a man, FRADUBIO, now a tree ;  
 ' Wretched man ! wretched tree ! whose nature weak,  
 ' A cruel witch, her cursed will to wreak,  
 ' Hath thus transformed, and placed in open plains,  
 ' Where Boreas doth blow full bitter bleak,  
 ' And scorching sun does dry my secret veins ;  
 ' For though a tree I seem, yet cold or heat me pains.'

- ' Say on, FRADURIO, then, or man or tree,'  
 Quoth then the knight, ' by whose mischievous arts,  
 ' Art thou misshaped thus, as now I see ?  
 ' He oft finds medicine who his grief imparts ;  
 ' But double griefs afflict concealing hearts,  
 ' As raging flames who striveth to suppress.'  
 ' The author then,' said he, ' of all my smarts,  
 ' Is one DUESSA, a false sorceress :  
 ' She many Christian knights hath brought to wretchedness.'
- ' In prime of youthful years, when courage hot  
 ' The fire of love and joy of chivalry  
 ' First kindled in my breast, it was my lot  
 ' To love this gentle lady, whom ye see  
 ' Now not a lady, but a seeming tree ;  
 ' With whom as once I rode accompanied,  
 ' Encountered by a knight I chanced to be,  
 ' Who had a like fair lady by his side ;  
 ' Like a fair lady, but did foul DUESSA hide :
- ' Whose forged beauty, he did take in hand,  
 ' All other dames to have exceeded far ;  
 ' I, in defence of mine, did likewise stand,  
 ' Mine that then did shine as the morning star.  
 ' So both to battle fierce arranged are,  
 ' In which his harder fortune was to fall  
 ' Under my spear ; such is the fate of war.  
 ' His lady, left as a prize martial,  
 ' Did yield her comely person to be at my call.
- ' So doubly loved of ladies unlike fair,  
 ' One seeming such, the other such indeed,  
 ' One day in doubt I tried to compare  
 ' Which one in beauty's glory did exceed ;  
 ' A rosy garland was the victor's meed.  
 ' Both seemed to win, and both seemed won to be,  
 ' So hard the discord was to be agreed.  
 ' FRÆLISSA was as fair as fair might be,  
 ' And ever false DUESSA seemed as fair as she.'
- ' The wicked witch, now seeing all this while  
 ' The doubtful balance equally to sway,  
 ' What not by right she tried to win by guile ;  
 ' And, by her hellish science, raised straight way  
 ' A foggy mist that overcast the day,  
 ' And blast, that, breathing on FRÆLISSA's face,  
 ' Dimmed her former beauty's shining ray,  
 ' And with foul ugly form did her disgrace ;  
 ' Then was she fair alone, when none was fair in place.'

' Then cried she out, ' Fy, fy, deformed wight,  
 ' Whose borrowed beauty now appeareth plain,  
 ' To have before bewitched all men's sight ;  
 ' O leave her soon, or let her soon be slain !'  
 ' Her loathly visage viewing with disdain,  
 ' At once I thought her such as she me told,  
 ' And would have killed her ; but, with feigned pain,  
 ' The false witch did my wrathful hand withhold ;  
 ' So left her, where she now is turned to tree in mould.'

' Thenceforth I took DUESSA for my dame,  
 ' And in the witch unwitting joyed long time,  
 ' Nor ever wist but that she was the same ;  
 ' Till on a day, that day is every prime,  
 ' When witches must do penance for their crime,  
 ' I chanced to see her in her proper hue,  
 ' Bathing herself in marjoram and thyme :  
 ' A filthy foul old woman I did view,  
 ' That ever to have touched her I did deadly rue.'

' Her nether parts misshapen monstrous  
 ' Were hid in water, that I could not see,  
 ' But they did seem more foul and hideous  
 ' Than woman's shape man would believe to be.  
 ' Thenceforth from her most beastly company  
 ' I did refrain, in mind to slip away,  
 ' Soon as appeared safe opportunity :  
 ' For danger great, if not assured decay,  
 ' I saw before mine eyes, if I were known to stray.'

' The devilish hag, by changes of my cheer,  
 ' Perceived my thought ; and, drowned in sleepy night,  
 ' With wicked herbs and ointments did besmear  
 ' My body, all through charms and magic might,  
 ' That all my senses were bereaved quite :  
 ' Then brought she me into this desert waste,  
 ' And by my wretched lover's side me pight ; [placed]  
 ' Where now, enclosed in wooden walls full fast,  
 ' Banished from living men, our weary days are past.'

' But how long time,' said then the REDCROSS knight,  
 ' Are you in this misformed house to dwell ?'  
 ' We may not change,' quoth he, ' this evil plight,  
 ' Till we be bathed in a living well :  
 ' That is the term prescribed by the spell.'  
 ' O now,' said he, ' may I that well out find,  
 ' That would restore you to your wonted well ?'  
 ' Time, and sufficed fates, to former kind,  
 ' Shall us restore ; none else from hence may us unbind.'

The false DUESSA, now FIDESSA hight, [named]  
 Heard how in vain FRADUBIO did lament,  
 And knew well all was true. But the good knight,  
 Full of sad fear and ghastly dreariment, [sorrow]  
 When all this speech the living tree had spent,  
 The bleeding bough did thrust into the ground,  
 That from the blood he might be innocent,  
 And with fresh clay did close the wooden wound :  
 Then turning to his lady, dead with fear her found.

Her seeming dead he found with feigned fear,  
 As all unwitting of what well she knew ;  
 And pained himself with busy care to rear  
 Her out of careless swoon ; her eye-lids blue,  
 And sight bedimm'd with pale and deadly hue,  
 At last she did uplift ; with trembling cheer  
 Her up he took, too simple and too true,  
 And oft her kiss'd. At length, all passed fear,  
 He set her on her steed, and forward forth did bear.



### CANTO III.

Forsaken Truth long seeks her love,  
 And makes the lion mild ;  
 Mars blind Devotion's mart, and falls  
 In hand of lecher vyld. [vile]

NOUGHT is there under heaven's wide hollowness,  
 That moves more dear compassion of the mind,  
 Than beauty brought to unworthy wretchedness,  
 Through envy's snares, or fortune's freaks unkind.  
 I, whether lately through her brightness blind,  
 Or through allegiance and fast fealty,  
 Which I do owe to all womankind,  
 Feel my heart pierced with so great agony,  
 When such I see, that all for pity I could die.

And now it is impassioned so deep,  
 For fairest UNA's sake, of whom I sing,  
 That my frail eyes these lines with tears do steep,  
 To think how she, through guileful handling,  
 Though true as touch, though daughter of a king,  
 Though fair as ever living wight was fair,  
 Though not in word or deed ill meriting,  
 Is from her knight divorced in despair,  
 And her due love transferred to that vile witch's share.

Yet she most faithful lady, all this while  
 Forsaken, woeful, solitary maid,  
 Far from all people's press, as in exile,  
 In wilderness and wasteful deserts strayed,  
 To seek her knight ; who, subtilely betrayed  
 Through that late vision which the enchanter wrought,  
 Had her abandoned : she, of nought afraid,  
 Through wood and wateness wide him daily sought,  
 Yet wish'd-for tidings of him none unto her brought.

One day, nigh weary of the irksome way,  
 From her unhasty beast she did alight,  
 And on the grass her dainty limbs did lay,  
 In secret shadow, far from all men's sight ;  
 From her fair head her fillet she undight, [undid]  
 And laid her robe aside : her angel face,  
 As the great eye of heaven, shined bright,  
 And made a sunshine in the shady place :  
 Never did mortal eye behold such heavenly grace.

It happ'd that, forth out of the thickest wood,  
 A ramping lion rushed suddenly,  
 Hunting full greedy after savage blood :  
 Soon as the royal virgin he did spy,  
 With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,  
 To have at once devoured her tender corse ;  
 But to the prey when as he drew more nigh,  
 His bloody rage assuaged with remorse,  
 And with the sight amazed, forgot his furious force.

Instead thereof, he kissed her weary feet,  
 And licked her lilly hands with fawning tongue,  
 As he her wronged innocence did weet. [know]  
 O how can beauty master the most strong,  
 And simple truth subdue avenging wrong !  
 Whose yielded pride and proud submission,  
 When she, still dreading death, had marked long,  
 Her heart did melt in great compassion ;  
 And drizzling tears did shed for pure affection.

' The lion, lord of every beast in field,'  
 Quoth she, ' his princely courage doth abate,  
 ' And mighty proud to humble weak does yield,  
 ' Forgetful of the hungry rage which late  
 ' Him pricked, in pity of my sad estate :  
 ' But he, my lion, and my noble lord,  
 ' How does he find in cruel heart to hate  
 ' Her who him loved, and ever most adored  
 ' As of my life the god ? Why hath he me abhorred ?'



Fast flowing tears now choked her complaint,  
 Which softly echo'd from the neighbouring wood ;  
 And, sad to see her sorrowful constraint,  
 The kingly beast upon her gazing stood ;  
 With pity calmed, down fell his angry mood.  
 At last, in close heart shutting up her pain,  
 Arose the virgin, born of heavenly brood,  
 And to her snowy palfrey got again,  
 To seek her straying champion if she might attain.

The lion would not leave her desolate,  
 But with her went along, as a strong guard  
 Of her chaste person, and a faithful mate  
 Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard.  
 Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and ward ;  
 And when she waked, he waited diligent,  
 With humble service to her well prepared.  
 From her fair eyes he took commandement,  
 And ever by her looks conceived her intent.

Long she thus travelled through deserts wide,  
 By which she thought her wandering knight should pass,  
 Yet never show of living wight espied ;  
 Till that at length she found the trodden grass,  
 In which the track of people's footing was,  
 Under the steep foot of a mountain hoar ;  
 The same she follows, till at last she has  
 A damsel spied slow-footing her before,  
 That on her shoulders sad a pot of water bore.

To whom approaching, she to her did call,  
 To know if dwelling place were nigh at hand :  
 But the rude wench her answered nought at all ;  
 She could not hear, nor speak, nor understand ;  
 Till, seeing by her side the lion stand,  
 With sudden fear the pitcher down she threw,  
 And fled away : for never in that land  
 Face of fair lady she before did view,  
 And that dread lion's look her cast in deadly hue.

Full fast she fled, nor ever looked behind,  
 As if her life upon the wager lay ;  
 And home she came, wherein her mother blind  
 Sat in eternal night : nought could she say,  
 But, sudden catching hold, did her dismay,  
 With quaking hands, and other signs of fear ;  
 Who, full of ghastly fright and cold affray, [terror]  
 Did shut the door. By this there stood before  
 Dame UNA, weary dame, and entrance did implore :

Which when none yielded, her unruly page,  
 With his rude claws the wicket open rent,  
 And let her in ; where, at his cruel rage  
 Nigh dead with fear and faint astonishment,  
 She found them both in darksome corner pent :  
 Where that old woman day and night did pray  
 Upon her beads, devoutly penitent ;  
 Nine hundred Paternosters every day,  
 And thrice nine hundred Aves, she was wont to say.

And to augment her painful penance more,  
 Thrice every week in ashes she did sit,  
 And next her wrinkled skin rough sackcloth wore,  
 And thrice three times did fast from any bit :  
 But now, for fear, her beads she did forget.  
 Whose needless dread for to remove away,  
 Fair UNA framed words and count'nance fit ;  
 Which hardly done, at length she did them pray,  
 That in their cottage small that night she rest her may.

The day is spent, and cometh drowsy night,  
 When every creature shrouded is in sleep.  
 Sad UNA lays her down in weary plight,  
 And at her feet the lion watch doth keep.  
 Instead of rest, she does lament and weep,  
 For the late loss of her dear-loved knight,  
 And sighs and groans, and evermore does steep  
 Her tender breast in bitter tears all night ;  
 The night she thinks too long, and often looks for light.

Now when Aldeboran was mounted high  
 Above the shiny Cassiopeia's chair,  
 And all in deadly sleep still drowned lie,  
 One knocked at the door, and in would fare ;  
 He knocked fast, and often curs'd and sware,  
 That entrance was not given at his call :  
 For on his back a heavy load he bare  
 Of nightly stealths and pillage several,  
 Which he had got abroad by actions criminal.

He was, in sooth, a stout and sturdy thief,  
 Wont to rob churches of their ornaments,  
 And poor men's boxes of their due relief,  
 Which given was to them with good intents ;  
 The holy saints of their rich vestiments  
 He did disrobe, when all men careless slept ;  
 And spoiled the priests of their habiliments.  
 While none the holy things in safety kept,  
 Then he by cunning sleight in at the window crept.

And all that he by right or wrong could find,  
Unto this house be brought, and did bestow  
Upon the daughter of this woman blind,  
ABESSA, daughter of CORCECA slow,  
With whom he whoredoms used that few did know.  
He fed her fat with feast of offerings,  
And plenty which in all the land did grow ;  
Nor spared he to give her gold and rings ;  
And now he to her brought part of his stolen things.

Thus long the door with rage and threats he beat,  
Yet of those fearful women none durst rise,  
(The lion frightened them) him in to let.  
He would no longer stay him to advise,  
But open breaks the door in furious wise,  
And entering is, when that disdainful beast,  
Encountering fierce, him sudden doth surprise ;  
And fixing cruel claws on trembling breast,  
Under his lordly foot him proudly hath supprest.

Him booteth not resist, nor succour call ;  
His bleeding heart is in th' avenger's hand,  
Who straight him rent in thousand pieces small,  
And killed him outright : the thirsty land  
Drank up his blood ; his corse left on the strand.  
His fearful friends wear out the woeful night,  
Nor dare to weep, nor seem to understand  
The heavy hap which on them is alight ;  
Afraid lest to themselves the like mishappen might.

Now when broad day the world discovered has,  
Up UNA rose, uprose the lion eke, [also]  
And on their former journey forward pass,  
In ways unknown, her wandering knight to seek,  
With pains far passing that long-wandering Greek  
Who for his love refused deity :  
Such were the labours of this lady meek,  
Still seeking him, who still from her did fly  
Then furthest from her hope, when most she deemed nigh.

Soon as she parted thence, the fearful twain,  
That blind old woman and her daughter dear,  
Came forth ; and, finding there KIRKRAPINE slain,  
For anguish great began to rend their hair,  
And beat their breasts, and naked flesh to tear :  
And when they both had wept and wailed their fill,  
Then forth they ran, like two amazed deer,  
Half mad through malice and revenging will,  
To follow her who was the author of their ill.

Whom overtaking, they began to bray,  
 With hollow howling and lamenting cry ;  
 Shamefully at her railing all the way,  
 And her accusing of dishonesty,  
 Who was the flower of faith and chastity :  
 And still, amidst their railing, they did pray  
 That plagues and mischiefs, and long misery  
 Might fall on her, and follow all the way ;  
 And that in endless error she might ever stray.

But, when they saw their prayers did nought prevail,  
 They back returned with their labour lost ;  
 And in the way as they did weep and wail,  
 A knight them met, in mighty arms emboss'd,  
 Yet knight was not, for all his bragging boast,  
 But ARCHIMAGO sly, who ever sought  
 Into new troubles UNA to have toss'd :  
 Of that old woman tidings he besought  
 If that of such a lady she could tell him aught.

Then she began her passion to renew,  
 And cry and curse and rail and rend her hair,  
 Saying, that harlot she too lately knew,  
 That caused her shed so many a bitter tear ;  
 And so told forth the story of her fear.  
 Much seemed he to moan her hapless chance,  
 And after of that lady did inquire ; [inquire]  
 And being told, he forward did advance  
 His fair enchanted steed, also his charmed lance.

Ere long he came where UNA travelled slow,  
 And that wild champion waiting her beside,  
 Who seeing such, for dread he durst not show  
 Himself too nigh at hand, but turned wide  
 Unto a hill ; from whence when she him spied,  
 By his like-seeming shield, her knight by name  
 She deemed it was, and towards him did ride :  
 Approaching nigh, she thought it was the same,  
 And, with fearful humbleness, toward him she came ;

And weeping said, ' Ah my long-lacked lord,  
 ' Where have ye been thus long out of my sight ?  
 ' Much feared I to have been quite abhorr'd,  
 ' Or aught t' have done that you displeased might,  
 ' Which would as death unto my dear heart light.  
 ' For since mine eye your joyous sight did miss,  
 ' My cheerful day is turned to cheerless night,  
 ' And every night of death the shadow is :  
 ' But welcome now, my light, and shining lamp of bliss !'

He thereto meeting said, ' My dearest dame,  
 ' Far be it from your thought, and from my will,  
 ' To think that knighthood I so much should shame,  
 ' As you to leave who have me loved still,  
 ' And chose in Fairy court, of mere good-will,  
 ' Where noblest knights were to be found on earth.  
 ' The earth shall sooner leave her kindly skill  
 ' To bring forth fruit, and make eternal dearth,  
 ' Than I leave you, my love, who sprang of heavenly birth.'

' And sooth to say, why I left you so long,  
 ' Was for to seek adventure in strange place,  
 ' Where, ARCHIMAGO said, a felon strong  
 ' To many knights did daily work disgrace ;  
 ' But knight he now shall nevermore deface.  
 ' This cause of my long absence may ye please  
 ' Well to accept, and evermore embrace  
 ' My faithful service, that by land and seas  
 ' Have vowed you to defend : now your complaint appease.'

His loving words her seemed due recompense  
 For all her bypast pains : one loving hour  
 For many years of sorrow can dispense :  
 A dram of sweet is worth a pound of sour.  
 She has forgot how many a woeful stour [danger]  
 For him she late endured : she speaks no more  
 Of past : true is, that true love hath no power  
 Backward to look ; his eyes are fixed before.  
 Before her stands her knight, for whom she toil'd so sore.

Much like as when the beaten mariner,  
 That long hath wandered in the ocean wide,  
 Oft soused in swelling Tethys' saltish tear ;  
 And long time having tann'd his tawny hide,  
 With blustering breath of heaven that none can bide,  
 And scorching flames of fierce Orion's hound ;  
 Soon as the port from far he has espied,  
 His cheerful whistle merrily doth sound,  
 And Nereus crowns with cups ; his mates him pledge around.

Such joy made UNA, when her knight she found ;  
 Th' enchanter likewise joyous seemed, no less  
 Than the glad merchant, who does view from ground  
 His ship far come from watery wilderness ;  
 He hurls out vows, and Neptune oft doth bless.  
 So forth they pass'd ; and all the way they spent  
 Discoursing of her dreadful late distress,  
 In which he asked her what the lion meant :  
 She told him all that fell in journey as she went.

They had not ridden far, when they might see  
 One pricking toward them with hasty heat,  
 Full strongly armed, and on a courser free,  
 That through his fierceness foamed all with sweat;  
 And the sharp iron did for anger eat,  
 When his hot rider spurr'd his chaffed side.  
 His look was stern, and seemed still to threat  
 Cruel revenge, which he in heart did hide:  
 And on his shield **SANS LOY** in bloody lines was dyed.

When nigh he drew unto this gentle pair,  
 And saw the red cross which the knight did bear,  
 He burnt in fire; and did at once prepare  
 Himself to battle with his couched spear.  
 Loath was that other, and did faint through fear,  
 To taste the untried dint of deadly steel:  
 But yet his lady did so well him cheer,  
 That hope of new good hap he gan to feel;  
 So bent his spear, and spurr'd his horse with iron heel.

But that proud Pagan forward came so fierce  
 And full of wrath, that, with his sharp-head spear,  
 Through vainly crossed shield he quite did pierce;  
 And, had his staggering steed not shrunk with fear,  
 Through shield and body too he should him bear;  
 Yet of such mighty power was his push,  
 That from his saddle quite he did him bear:  
 He, tumbling rudely down, to ground did rush,  
 And from his gored wound a well of blood did gush.

Dismounting lightly from his lofty steed,  
 He to him leaped, in mind to take his life,  
 And proudly said, 'Lo, there the worthy meed  
 ' Of him that slew **SANSFOY** with bloody knife:  
 ' Henceforth his ghost, freed from repining strife,  
 ' In peace may pass over the Lethe lake,  
 ' When mourning altars, purged with enemy's life,  
 ' The black infernal furies do aslake:  
 ' Life from **SANSFOY** thou took'st, **SANSLOY** shall from thee take.'

Therewith in haste his helmet gan unlace,  
 Till **UNA** cried, 'O hold that heavy hand,  
 ' Dear sir, whatever that thou be in place:  
 ' Enough is that thy foe doth vanquish'd stand  
 ' Now at thy mercy; mercy don't with withstand,  
 ' For he is one the truest knight alive,  
 ' Though conquered now he lies on lowly land;  
 ' Who, whilst him fortune favoured, fair did thrive  
 ' In bloody field; therefore of life him don't deprive.'

Her piteous words might not abate his rage ;  
But rudely rending up his helmet, would  
Have slain him straight ; but when he sees his age,  
And hoary head of ARCHIMAGO old,  
His hasty hand he doth amazed hold,  
And, half ashamed, wondered at the sight :  
For that old man well knew he, though untold,  
In charms and magic to have wondrous might,  
Nor ever wont in field, or in round lists, to fight ;

And said, ' Why ARCHIMAGO, luckless sire,  
' What do I see ? what hard mishap is this  
' That hath thee hither brought to taste mine ire ?  
' Or thine the fault, or mine the error is,  
' Instead of foe to wound my friend amiss ?'  
He answered nought, but in a trance he lay,  
And on those guileful glazed eyes of his  
The cloud of death did sit ; which passed away,  
He left him lying so, and would no longer stay ;

But to the virgin comes ; who all this while  
Amazed stands, herself so mocked to see  
By him who has the guerdon of his guile,  
For so misfeigning her true knight to be :  
Yet is she now in more perplexity,  
Left in the hand of that same Pagan bold,  
From whom it booteth not at all to fly ;  
Who, by her cleanly garment catching hold,  
Her from her palfrey plucked, her visage to behold.

But her fierce servant, full of kingly awe  
And high disdain, when as his sovereign dame,  
So rudely handled by her foe he saw,  
With gaping jaws full greedy at him came,  
And, ramping on his shield, did think the same  
T' have reft away with his sharp rending claws :  
But he was stout, and lust did now inflame  
His courage more, that from the griping paws  
He hath his shield redeemed, and forth his sword he draws.

O then too weak and feeble was the force  
Of savage beast, his power to withstand !  
For he was strong, and of so mighty corse,  
As ever weilded spear in warlike hand,  
And feats of arms did wisely understand.  
Full soon he pierced through his chafed chest,  
With thrilling point of deadly iron brand,  
And lanced his lordly heart : with death oppress,  
He roared aloud, while life forsook his stubborn breast.

Who now is left to keep the forlorn maid  
 From raging spoil of lawless victor's will?  
 Her faithful guard removed; her hope dismayed;  
 Herself a yielded prey to save or spill?  
 He now, lord of the field, his pride to fill,  
 With foul reproaches and disdainful spite,  
 Her vilely entertains; and, will or nill,  
 Bears her away upon his courser light:  
 Her prayers will nought prevail; his rage is more of might.

And all the way, with great lamenting pain,  
 And piteous complaints, she filleth his dull ears,  
 That stony heart could riven have in twain;  
 And all the way she wets with flowing tears;  
 But he enraged with rancour nothing hears.  
 Her servile beast yet would not leave her so,  
 But follows her far off, nor aught he fears,  
 To be partaker of her wandering woe;  
 More mild in beastly kind, than that her beastly foe.

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#### CANTO IV.

To sinful house of Pride Duessa-  
 a guides the faithful knight;  
 Where, brother's death to wreak, Sanajoy  
 Doth challenge him to fight.

Young knight, whoever, that dost arms profess,  
 And through long labours hunttest after fame,  
 Beware of fraud, beware of fickleness,  
 In choice and change of thy dear-loved dame;  
 Lest thou of her believe too lightly blame,  
 And rash misdeeming do thy heart remove:  
 For unto knight there is no greater shame,  
 Than lightness and inconstancy in love;  
 Which doth this REDCROSS knight's example plainly prove:

Who, after that he had fair UNA left,  
 Through light misdeeming of her loyalty,  
 And false DUESSA in her stead had stept,  
 Called FIDESSA, so supposed to be,  
 Long with her travelled; till at last they see  
 A goodly building, bravely garnished;  
 The house of mighty prince it seemed to be,  
 And towards it a broad high way there led,  
 All bare by people's feet who thither travelled.



Great troupes of people travelled thitherward,  
 Both day and night, of each degree and place ;  
 But few returned, who escaped hard,  
 With baleful beggary or foul disgrace,  
 And ever after, in most wretched case,  
 Like loathsome lazars, by the hedges lay.  
 Thither DUESSA bade him bend his pace ;  
 For she is weary of the toilsome way,  
 And also nigh consumed is the lingering day.

A stately palace built of squared brick,  
 Which cunningly was without mortar laid,  
 Whose walls were high, but nothing strong nor thick,  
 And golden foil all over them displayed,  
 That purest sky with brightness they dismayed.  
 High lifted up were many lofty towers,  
 And goodly galleries far over laid ;  
 Full of fair windows and delightful bowers ;  
 And on the top a dial told the timely hours.

It was a goodly heap for to behold,  
 And spake the praises of the workman's wit ;  
 But full great pity that so fair a mould  
 Did on so weak foundation ever sit ;  
 For on a sandy hill, that still did flit  
 And fall away, it mounted was full high,  
 That every breath of heaven shook it ;  
 And all the hinder parts, that few could spy,  
 Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.

Arrived there, they passed in forth right ;  
 For still to all the gates stood open wide :  
 Yet charge of them was with a porter pight, [placed]  
 Called MALVENU, who entrance none denied.  
 Thence to the hall, which was on every side  
 With rich array and costly arras dight, [decked]  
 Infinite sorts of people did abide,  
 There waiting long, to win the wished sight  
 Of her who was the lady of that palace bright.

By them they pass, all gazing on them round,  
 And to the presence mount, whose glorious view  
 Their frail amazed senses did confound.  
 In living prince's court, none ever knew  
 Such endless riches and such sumptuous shew.  
 Not Persia self, the nurse of pompous pride,  
 Like ever saw : and there a noble crew  
 Of lords and ladies stood on every side,  
 Who, with their presence fair, the place much beautified.

High above all a cloth of state was spread,  
 And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day,  
 On which there sat, most brave embellished  
 With royal robes and gorgeous array,  
 A maiden queen. It shone, as Titan's ray,  
 In glistening gold and peerless precious stone :  
 Yet her bright blazing beauty did assay  
 To dim the brightness of her glorious throne,  
 As envying herself, who too exceeding shone ;

Exceeding shone, like Phœbus' fairest child,  
 Who did presume his father's fiery wain,  
 And flaming mouths of steeds unwonted wild,  
 Through highest heaven with weaker hand to rein ;  
 Proud of such glory and advancement vain,  
 While flashing beams do blind his feeble eyes,  
 He leaves the welkin way most beaten plain,  
 And, rapt with whirling wheels, inflames the skies,  
 With fire not made to burn, but dazzle all men's eyes.

So proud she shined in her princely state,  
 Looking to heaven, for earth she did disdain ;  
 And sitting high, for lowly she did hate.  
 Lo, underneath her scornful feet was lain  
 A dreadful dragon, with a hideous train :  
 And in her hand she held a mirror bright,  
 Wherein her face she often viewed fain,  
 And in her self-loved semblance took delight ;  
 For she was wondrous fair, as any living wight.

Of grisly Pluto she the daughter was,  
 And sad Proserpina, the queen of hell ;  
 Yet did she think her peerless worth to pass  
 That parentage, with pride so did she swell ;  
 And thundering Jove, who high in heaven doth dwell,  
 And wield the world, she claimed for her sire ;  
 Or if that any else did Jove excel ;  
 For to the highest she did still aspire,  
 Or, if aught higher were than that, did it desire.

And proud LUCIFERA men did her call,  
 Who made herself a queen, and crowned to be ;  
 Yet rightful kingdom she had none at all,  
 Nor heritage of native sovereignty ;  
 But did usurp, with wrong and tyranny,  
 Upon the sceptre which she now did hold ;  
 Nor ruled her realms with laws, but policy,  
 And strong advisement of six wizards old,  
 Who with their counsels bad, her kingdom did uphold.

Soon as the REDCROSS knight in presence came,  
 And false DUESSA, seeming lady fair,  
 A gentle usher, Vanity by name,  
 Made room, and passage for them did prepare :  
 So goodly brought them to the lowest stair  
 Of her high throne ; where they, on humble knee  
 Making obeisance, did the cause declare  
 Why they were come, her royal state to see,  
 To prove the wide report of her great majesty.

With lofty eyes, half loath to look so low,  
 She thanked them in her disdainful wise ;  
 Nor other grace vouchsafed them to show  
 Of princes worthy ; scarce them bade arise ;  
 Her lords and ladies all this while devise  
 Themselves to set forth full to strangers' sight :  
 Some plait their curled hair in courtly guise ;  
 Some crest their ruffs ; and others trimly dight [arrange]  
 Their gay attire : each, other's greater pride, does spite.

Goodly they all that knight do entertain,  
 Right glad with him to have increased their crew ;  
 But to DUESSA each himself did pain  
 All kindness and fair courtesy to shew,  
 For in that court before her well they knew.  
 Yet the stout champion, 'mongst the thickest crowd,  
 Thought all their glory vain in knightly view,  
 And that great princess too exceeding proud,  
 Who to strange knight no better countenance allowed.

Sudden upriseth from her stately place  
 The royal dame, and for her coach did call.  
 They all rush forth ; and she, with princely pace,  
 As fair Aurora in her purple pall  
 Out of the east the dawning day doth call,  
 So forth did come ; her brightness broad doth blaze.  
 The heaps of people, thronging in the hall,  
 Jostle each other, upon her to gaze :  
 Her glorious glittering light doth all men's eyes amaze.

So forth she comes, and to her coach does climb,  
 Adorned all with gold and garlands gay,  
 That seemed as fresh as Flora in her prime.  
 She strove to match, in royal rich array,  
 Great Juno's golden chair ; the which, they say,  
 The gods stand gazing on, when she does ride  
 To Jove's high house through heaven's brass-paved way,  
 Drawn by fair peacocks that excel in pride,  
 And full of Argus' eyes their tails disspreading wide.

But this was drawn by six unequal beasts,  
 On which her six sage counsellors did ride,  
 Taught to obey their bestial behests,  
 With like conditions to their kinds applied :  
 Of which the first, that all the rest did guide,  
 Was sluggish Idleness, the nurse of sin ;  
 Upon a slothful ass he chose to ride,  
 Loosely arrayed in habit black and thin,  
 Like to a holy monk, the service to begin.

And in his hand a prayer-book still he bare,  
 That much was worn, but therein little read ;  
 For of devotion he had little care ;  
 Still drowned in sleep, he passed his days as dead ;  
 Scarce could he once uphold his heavy head,  
 To look out whether it were night or day.  
 It seems the wain was very evil led,  
 When such an one had guiding of the way,  
 Who knew not whether right he went or else astray.

From worldly cares he did himself excuse,  
 And greatly shunned manly exercise ;  
 And every work he alway did refuse,  
 For contemplation's sake ; yet otherwise  
 His life he led in lawless riotise, [rioting]  
 By which he grew to grievous malady ;  
 For in his listless limbs, through evil guise,  
 A shaking fever reigned continually :  
 Such one was Idleness, first of this company.

And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,  
 Deformed creature, on a filthy swine ;  
 His belly was upblown with luxury,  
 And all with fatness swollen were his eyne ; [eyes]  
 And like a crane his neck was long and fine,  
 With which he swallowed up excessive feast,  
 For want whereof poor people oft did pine :  
 And all the way, most like a brutish beast,  
 His surfeit he disgorged, that all did him detest.

In green vine leaves he was right fitly clad,  
 For other clothes he could not wear for heat ;  
 And on his head an ivy garland had,  
 From under which fast trickled down the sweat :  
 Still as he rode, he somewhat still did eat,  
 And in his hand did bear a bousing can,  
 Of which he sipp'd so oft, that on his seat  
 His drunken body scarce uphold he can :  
 In shape and life more like a monster than a man.

Unfit he was for any worldly thing,  
Likewise unable once to stir or go ;  
Not meet to be of council to a king,  
Whose mind in meat and drink was drowned so,  
That from his friend he seldom knew his foe :  
Full of diseases was his carcass blue,  
And a dry dropsy through his flesh did flow,  
Which by misdiet daily greater grew :  
Such one was Gluttony, the second of that crew.

And next to him rode lustful Lechery  
Upon a bearded goat, whose rugged hair,  
And faded eyes, the sign of jealousy,  
Were like the person's self whom he did bear,  
Who rough, and black, and filthy did appear :  
Unseemly man to please fair lady's eye,  
Yet he of ladies oft was loved dear,  
Who fairer faces strangely passed by.  
Oh, who does know the bent of women's fantasy !

In a green gown he clothed was full fair,  
Which underneath did hide his filthiness ;  
And in his hand a burning heart he bare,  
Full of vain follies and new-fangleness ;  
For he was false, and fraught with fickleness :  
And learned had to love with secret looks ;  
And well could dance ; and sing with ruefulness ;  
And fortunes tell ; and read in loving books ;  
And thousand other ways, to bait his fleshly hooks.

Inconstant man, who loved all he saw,  
And lusted after all that he did love ;  
Nor would his looser life be tied to law,  
But joyed weak women's hearts to tempt, and prove  
If from their loyal loves he might them move :  
Which lewdness filled him with reproachful pain  
Of that foul evil, which all men reprove,  
That rots the marrow, and consumes the brain :  
Such one was Lechery, the third of all this train.

And greedy Avarice by him did ride,  
Upon a camel laden all with gold :  
Two iron coffers hung on either side,  
With precious metal full as they might hold ;  
And in his lap a heap of coin he told ;  
For of his wicked pelf his god he made,  
And unto hell himself for money sold :  
Accursed usury was all his trade ;  
And right and wrong alike in equal balance weighed.

His life full nigh unto death's door was brought;  
 And thread-bare coat and cobbled shoes he ware;  
 Nor scarce good morsel all his life he sought,  
 But both from back and belly still did spare,  
 To fill his bags, and riches to prepare:  
 Yet child or kinsman living had he none  
 To leave them to; but all through daily care  
 To get, and nightly fear to lose his own,  
 He led a wretched life, unto himself unknown.

Most wretched man, whom nothing could suffice;  
 Whose greedy lust did lack in greatest store;  
 Whose needs were met, but not his covetise; [covetousness]  
 Whose wealth was want; whose plenty made him poor;  
 Who had enough, yet ever wished more;  
 A vile disease: and both in foot and hand  
 A grievous gout tormented him full sore;  
 That well he could not touch, or go, or stand:  
 Such one was Avarice, the fourth of this fair band.

And next to him malicious Envy rode  
 Upon a ravenous wolf, and still did chew  
 Between his cankered teeth a venomous toad,  
 And all the poison ran about his jaw;  
 But inwardly he gnawed his own maw  
 At neighbour's wealth, which made him ever sad:  
 For death to him was any good he saw;  
 He wept when cause of weeping none he had,  
 But when he heard of harm, he waxed wondrous glad.

All in a garb of many-coloured say [slk]  
 He clothed was, and painted full of eyes;  
 And in his bosom secretly there lay  
 A hateful snake, the which his tail upties  
 In many folds, and mortal sting there lies:  
 Still as he rode he gnashed his teeth to see  
 Those heaps of gold with griping Covetise; [Avarice]  
 And grudged at the great felicity  
 Of proud LUCIFERA, and his own company.

He hated all good works and virtuous deeds,  
 And him no less who any such did use;  
 And who with gracious bread the hungry feeds,  
 His alms for want of faith he doth accuse;  
 So every good to bad he doth abuse:  
 The verses too of famous poet's wit  
 He does backbite, and spiteful poison spews  
 From leprous mouth, on all they ever writ:  
 Such one vile Envy was, who fifth in row did sit.

And him beside rides fierce revenging Wrath,  
 Upon a lion, loathing to be led ;  
 And in his hand a burning brand he hath,  
 The which he brandisheth about his head :  
 His eyes did hurl forth sparkles fiery red,  
 And stared stern on all who him beheld,  
 Who pale as ashes grew and seeming dead ;  
 And on his dagger still his hand he held,  
 Trembling with hasty rage, when choler in him swelled.

His ruffian raiment all was stained with blood  
 Which he had spilt, and all to rags was rent ;  
 Through unadvised rashness waxen wood ; [mad]  
 For of his hands he had no government,  
 Nor cared for blood in his avengement : [revenge]  
 But when the furious fit was overpast,  
 His cruel deeds he often would repent ;  
 Yet, wilful man, he never would forecast,  
 How many mischiefs would ensue from heedless haste.

Full many mischiefs follow cruel Wrath ;  
 Abhorred Bloodshed, and tumultuous Strife,  
 Unmanly Murder, and unthrifty Scath, [waste]  
 Bitter Despite, with Rancour's rusty knife,  
 And fretting Grief, the enemy of life ;  
 All these, and many evils more, haunt Ire,  
 The swelling Spleen, and Frenzy raging rife,  
 The shaking Palsy, and Saint Francis' fire :  
 Such one was Wrath, the last of this ungodly tire. [train]

And after all, upon the chariot beam,  
 Rode Satan, with a smarting whip in hand,  
 With which he forward lashed the lazy team,  
 As oft as Sloth still in the mire did stand.  
 Vast crowds of people did about them band,  
 Shouting for joy ; and still before their way,  
 A foggy mist had covered all the land ;  
 And, underneath their feet, there scattered lay  
 Dead skulls and bones of men, whose lives had gone astray.

So forth they marched in this goodly sort,  
 To take the solace of the open air,  
 And in fresh flowering fields themselves to sport :  
 Amongst the rest rode that false lady fair,  
 The foul DUESSA, next unto the chair  
 Of proud LUCIFERA, as of the train :  
 But that good knight would not so nigh repair,  
 Himself estranging from their pleasures vain,  
 Whose fellowship seemed far unfit for warlike swain.

So having solaced themselves a space,  
 And in the breathing fields with pleasure fed,  
 They back returned to the princely place;  
 Whereto an errant knight in arms was led,  
 With heathen shield, whereon in letters red  
 Was writ **SANS JOY** : him new arrived they find :  
 Inflamed with wrath and fiery hardyhead,  
 He seemed in heart to harbour thoughts unkind,  
 And nourish bloody vengeance in his bitter mind.

Who, when the shamed shield of slain **SANSROY**  
 He saw with that same **REDCROSS** champion's page,  
 Discov'ring him who did of late destroy  
 His eldest brother ; burning all with rage,  
 He to him leaped, and that same envied gage  
 Of victor's glory from him snatched away :  
 The **REDCROSS** knight, who claimed that warlike wage,  
 Disdained to lose the meed he won in fray,  
 And, him encountering fierce, retook the noble prey.

Then they began to hurry greedily,  
 Redoubted battle ready to darrayne ; [prepare]  
 They clash their shields, and shake their swords on high,  
 And with their stir they trouble all the train ;  
 Till that great queen, upon eternal pain  
 Of high displeasure that incur they might,  
 Commanded them their fury to restrain ;  
 And if that either to that shield had right,  
 In equal lists they should to-morrow show in fight.

' Ah dearest dame,' quoth then the Pagan bold,  
 ' Pardon the error of enraged wight,  
 ' Whom grief hath made forget the reins to hold  
 ' Of reason's rule, to see this recreant knight,  
 ' (No knight, but traitor full of false despite  
 ' And shameful treason,) who through guile hath slain  
 ' The bravest knight that ever field did fight,  
 ' Even stout **SANSROY**, O who can then refrain ?  
 ' Whose shield he bears reversed, the more to heap disdain.'

' And to augment the glory of his guile,  
 ' His dearest love, the fair **FIDESSA**, lo,  
 ' Is there possessed by the traitor vile ;  
 ' Who reaps the harvest sowed by his foe,  
 ' Sowed in bloody field, and bought with woe :  
 ' That wrong a brother's hand shall well requite,  
 ' If you, O queen, will equal favour show.'  
 Him little answered the **REDCROSS** knight,  
 Who never meant with words, but swords, to plead his right.



He threw his gauntlet, as a sacred pledge,  
 His cause in combat the next day to try :  
 So done, they parted both, with hearts on edge  
 To be aveng'd each on his enemy.  
 That night they passed in joy and jollity,  
 Feasting and courting both in bower and hall ;  
 The steward was excessive Gluttony,  
 That of his plenty poured forth to all :  
 At length, the chamberlain Sloth them to rest did call.

Now when the darksome Night had all displayed  
 Her coal-black curtain over brightest sky,  
 The warlike youths, on dainty couches laid,  
 Did chace away sweet sleep from sluggish eye,  
 To muse on means of hoped victory.  
 But when that Morpheus had with leaden mace  
 Arrested all that courtly company,  
 Uprose DUESSA from her resting place,  
 And to the Pagan's lodging comes with silent pace :

Whom broad awake she finds in troublous fit,  
 Forecasting how his foe he might annoy,  
 And him she moves with speeches seeming fit ;  
 ' Ah dear SANSJOY, next dearest to SANSFOY,  
 ' Cause of my new grief, cause of my new joy ;  
 ' Joyous to see his image in mine eye,  
 ' And grieved to think how foe did him destroy,  
 ' Who was the flower of grace and chivalry ;  
 ' Lo, his FIDESSA, to thy secret faith I fly.'

With gentle words he did her fairly greet,  
 And bade say on the secrets of her heart :  
 Then, sighing soft, ' I learn that little sweet  
 ' Oft mixed is,' quoth she, ' with much of smart :  
 ' For since my breast was pierced with loving dart  
 ' Of dear SANSFOY, I've not enjoyed an hour,  
 ' But in eternal woe my weaker heart  
 ' I've wasted, loving him with all my power,  
 ' And for his sake have felt full many a heavy stour.' [grief]

' At last, when perils all I deemed past,  
 ' And hoped to reap the crop of all my cares,  
 ' Into new woes unwitting I was cast  
 ' By this false traitor, who unworthy wears  
 ' His worthy shield, whom he with guileful snares  
 ' Entrapped slew, and brought to shameful grave :  
 ' Me, silly maid, away with him he bears,  
 ' And ever since hath kept in darksome cave ;  
 ' Because I would not yield what to SANSFOY I gave.'

' But now the sun dispels that lowering cloud,  
 ' And to my loathed life hath shewn some light ;  
 ' Under your beams I will me safely shroud  
 ' From dreaded storm of his disdainful spite :  
 ' To you th' inheritance belongs by right  
 ' Of brother's praise, to you belongs his love.  
 ' Let not his love, let not his restless sprite,  
 ' Be unrevenged, that calls to you above  
 ' From wandering Stygian shores, where it doth endless move.'

Thereto said he, ' Fair dame, be not dismayed  
 ' For sorrows past ; their grief is with them gone.  
 ' Nor yet of present peril be afraid,  
 ' For needless fear advantage gives to none ;  
 ' And helpless hap it booteth not to moan :  
 ' Dead is **SANSFOY** ; his mortal pains are past,  
 ' Though grieved ghost for vengeance deep doth groan :  
 ' He lives who shall him pay his duties last ;  
 ' The blood of Christian knight shall to the dogs be cast.'

' O but I fear the fickle freaks,' quoth she,  
 ' Of fortune false, and odds of arms in field.'  
 ' Why dame,' quoth he, ' what odds can ever be  
 ' Where both do fight alike, to win or yield ?  
 ' Yea but,' quoth she, ' he bears a charmed shield,  
 ' Also enchanted arms that none can pierce ;  
 ' And none can wound the man that does them wield.'  
 ' Charmed or enchanted,' answered he then fierce,  
 ' I no whit reck, nor need you that to me rehearse.'

' But, fair **FIDESSA**, since now fortune's guile,  
 ' Or enemy's power hath captivated you,  
 ' Return from whence ye came and rest awhile,  
 ' Till morrow next, that I this knight subdue,  
 ' And with **SANSFOY**'s dead dowry you endue.'  
 ' Ah me, that is a double death,' she said,  
 ' With proud foe's sight my sorrow to renew :  
 ' Wherever yet I be, my secret aid  
 ' Shall follow you.' So passing forth she him obeyed.

## CANTO V.

The faithful knight, in equal field,  
 Subdues his faithless foe ;  
 Whom false Duesse saves,  
 And for his cure to hell does go.

The noble heart that harbours virtuous thought,  
 And does expand with glorious great intent,  
 Can never rest, until it forth have brought  
 The eternal brood of glory excellent.  
 Such restless passion did all night torment  
 The flaming courage of the Redcross knight,  
 Devising how that doughty tournament  
 With greatest honour be achieved might :  
 Still did he wake, and still did watch for dawning light.

At last the golden oriental gate  
 Of greatest heaven gan to open fair ;  
 And Phœbus, fresh as bridegroom to his mate,  
 Came dancing forth, shaking his dewy hair,  
 And hurled his glistering beams through gloomy air.  
 Which when the wakeful knight perceived, straightway  
 He started up, and did himself prepare  
 In sun-bright arms and battlesome array ;  
 For with that Pagan proud he combat will that day.

And forth he comes into the common hall,  
 Where early wait him many a gazing eye,  
 To learn what end to stranger knights may fall.  
 There many minstrels make much melody,  
 To drive away the dull melancholy ;  
 And many bards, who to the trembling chord  
 Can tune their timely voices cunningly ;  
 And many chroniclers, who can record  
 Old loves, and wars for ladies done by many a lord.

Soon after comes the cruel Sarazin,  
 In woven mail all armed warily,  
 And sternly looks at him, who not a pin  
 Does care for look of living creature's eye.  
 They bring them wines of Greece and Araby,  
 And dainty spices fetch'd from furthest Ind,  
 To kindle heat of courage privily ;  
 And in the wine a solemn oath they bind  
 T' observe the sacred laws of arms that are assigned.

At last forth comes that far renowned queen,  
 With royal pomp and princely majesty ;  
 She is encircled in a fenced green,  
 And placed under stately canopy,  
 The warlike feats of both these knights to see.  
 On th' other side, in all men's open view,  
 DUESSA placed is ; and on a tree  
 SANSROY his shield is hung with bloody hue ;  
 Both these the laurel garlands to the victor due.

A shrilling trumpet sounded from on high,  
 And unto battle bade themselves address :  
 Their shining shields about their wrists they tie,  
 And burning blades about their heads do bless, [brandish]  
 The instruments of wrath and heaviness.  
 With greedy force each other doth assail,  
 And strike so fiercely that they do impress  
 Deep-dinted furrows in the battered mail :  
 The iron walls to ward the blows are weak and frail.

The Saracen was bold and wondrous strong,  
 And heaped blows like iron hammers great ;  
 For after blood and vengeance he did long.  
 The knight was fierce, and full of youthful heat,  
 And doubled strokes like dreaded thunder's threat ;  
 For all for praise and honour did he fight.  
 Both stricken strike, and beaten both do beat ;  
 That from their shields forth fieth fiery light,  
 And helmets, deeply hewed, shew marks of either's might.

The one for wrong, the other strives for right :  
 As when a griffin seized has his prey,  
 A dragon fierce encountereth in his flight,  
 Through widest air making his idle way,  
 That would his rightful ravine rend away ;  
 With hideous horror both together smite,  
 And strive so sore that they the heavens affray.  
 The wise soothsayer, seeing so sad a sight,  
 The amazed vulgar tells of war and mortal fight.

So one for wrong, the other strives for right,  
 And each to deadly shame would drive his foe :  
 The cruel steel so greedily doth bite  
 The tender flesh, that streams of blood do flow ;  
 With which the arms, that erst so bright did show,  
 Into a deep vermillion now are dyed.  
 Great ruth in all the gazers hearts did grow,  
 Seeing the gored wounds to gape so wide,  
 That victory they dare not wish to either side.

At last the Pagan chanced to cast his eye,  
 His sudden eye, flaming with wrathful fire,  
 Upon his brother's shield which hung thereby :  
 Therewith redoubled was his raging ire,  
 And said, ' Ah wretched son of woeful sire,  
 ' Dost thou sit wailing by black Stygian lake,  
 ' Whilst here thy shield is hung for victor's hire ?  
 ' And, sluggish SANSJOY, do thy forces slake  
 ' Thither to send his foe, that him may overtake ?'

' Go, caitiff knight, him quickly overtake,  
 ' And soon redeem from his long-wandering woe ;  
 ' Go, guilty ghost, to him my message make,  
 ' That I his shield have got from dying foe.'  
 Therewith upon his crest he struck him so,  
 That twice he reeled, ready twice to fall :  
 End of the doubtful battle deemed tho [then]  
 The lookers on ; and loud to him did call  
 The false DUESSA, ' Thine the shield, and I and all !'

Soon as the knight did hear his lady speak,  
 Out of his swooning dream he did awake ;  
 And quickening faith, that erst was waxen weak,  
 The creeping deadly cold away did shake ;  
 Then moved with wrath and shame and ladies' sake,  
 Of all at once he would avenged be,  
 And with exceeding fury at him strake, [struck]  
 That he was forced to stoop upon his knee :  
 Had he not stooped so, cloven would have been he.

The champion said, ' Go now proud miscreant,  
 ' Thyself thy message take to brother dear ;  
 ' Wandering alone, too long he doth thee want :  
 ' Go say his foe thy shield with his doth bear.'  
 Therewith his heavy hand he high did rear,  
 Him to have slain ; when, lo, a darksome cloud,  
 Upon him fell ; he nowhere doth appear,  
 But vanished is. The knight him calls aloud,  
 But answer none receives ; the darkness him doth shroud.

In haste DUESSA from her place arose,  
 And to him running said, ' O bravest knight,  
 ' That ever lady to her love did chose,  
 ' Let now abate the terror of your might,  
 ' And quench the flame of furious despite,  
 ' And bloody vengeance : lo, th infernal powers,  
 ' Covering your foe with cloud of deadly night,  
 ' Have borne him hence to Pluto's baleful bowers :  
 ' The conquest yours ; I yours ; the shield and glory yours !'

Not all so satisfied, with greedy eye  
 He sought, all round about, his thirsty blade  
 To bathe in blood of faithless enemy,  
 Who all the while lay hid in secret shade :  
 He stands amazed how he thence should fade.  
 At last the trumpets triumph sound on high,  
 And running heralds humble homage made,  
 Greeting him goodly with new victory ;  
 And to him brought the shield, the cause of enmity.

Wherewith he goeth to that sovereign queen,  
 And, falling her before on lowly knee,  
 To her makes present of his service seen,  
 Which she accepts with thanks and goodly gree, [pleasure]  
 Greatly extolling his great chivalry :  
 She marcheth home, and by her takes the knight,  
 Whom all the people follow with great glee,  
 Shouting, and clapping all their hands on height,  
 That all the air it fills, and flies to heaven bright.

Home is he brought, and laid in sumptuous bed,  
 Where many skilful surgeons him abide,  
 To dress his wounds which yet still freshly bled :  
 With wine and oil they wash the gashes wide,  
 And softly did embalm on every side ;  
 And all the while most heavenly melody  
 About the bed sweet musick did divide,  
 Him to beguile of grief and agony :  
 And all the while DUESSA wept full bitterly.

As when a weary traveller, that strays  
 By muddy shore of broad seven-mouthed Nile,  
 Unsuspecting of the dangerous ways,  
 Doth meet a cruel crafty crocodile,  
 Which, in false grief hiding her harmful guile,  
 Doth weep full sore, and sheddeth tender tears ;  
 The foolish man, who pities all this while  
 Her mournful plight, is swallowed unawares ;  
 Forgetful of his own, in minding other's cares.

So wept DUESSA until eventide,  
 When shining lamps in Jove's high house were light :  
 Then forth she rose, nor longer would abide,  
 But comes unto the place where heathen knight,  
 In slumbering swoon nigh void of vital sprite,  
 Lay covered with enchanted cloud all day :  
 Whom when she found in such a mournful plight,  
 To wail his woeful case she would not stay,  
 But to the eastern coast of heaven makes speedy way ;

Where grisly Night, with visage deadly sad,  
 Which Phœbus' cheerful face durst never view,  
 And in a foul black pitchy mantle clad,  
 She finds forth coming from her darksome mew,  
 Where she all day did hide her hateful hue.  
 Before the door her iron chariot stood,  
 Already harnessed for journey new,  
 And coal-black horses, born of hellish brood,  
 That on their rusty bits did champ, as they were wood. [mad]

Who, when she saw DUESSA sunny bright,  
 Adorned with gold and jewels shining clear,  
 She greatly grew amazed at the sight,  
 And th' unacquainted light began to fear ;  
 For never did such brightness there appear ;  
 She would have back retired to her cave,  
 Until the witch's speech she gan to hear,  
 Saying, ' Yet, O thou dreaded dame, I crave  
 ' Abide, till I have told the message which I have.'

She stayed ; and forth DUESSA did proceed ;  
 ' O thou most ancient grandmother of all,  
 ' More old than Jove, whom thou at first didst breed,  
 ' Or that great house of gods celestial,  
 ' Who wast begot in Dæmogorgon's hall,  
 ' And sawest the secrets of the world unmade,  
 ' Why sufferest thou thy nephews dear to fall,  
 ' With Christian sword most shamefully betrayed ?  
 ' Lo, where the stout SANSJOY doth sleep in deadly shade !'

' And, him before, I saw with bitter eyes,  
 ' The bold SANSFOY struck down by self-same spear ;  
 ' And still the prey of birds in field he lies,  
 ' Nor wailed of friends, nor laid on groaning bier,  
 ' Who was to me before too dearly dear.  
 ' O what of gods then boots it to be born,  
 ' If old AVEUGLE's sons such evil bear ?  
 ' Or who shall not Night's greatest children scorn,  
 ' When two of three her nephews are so foul forlorn ?'

' Up, then ; up, dreary dame, of darkness queen ;  
 ' Go, gather up the relics of thy race ;  
 ' Or else, go, them avenge ; let it be seen  
 ' That dreaded Night in brightest day hath place,  
 ' And can the children of fair Light deface.'  
 These feeling speeches some compassion moved  
 In heart, and changed that great mother's face ;  
 Yet pity in her heart was never proved  
 Till then ; for evermore she hated, never loved.





And all the while she stood upon the ground,  
The wakeful dogs did never cease to bay ;  
As giving warning of the unwonted sound,  
With which her iron wheels did them affray,  
And her dark grisly look them much dismay.  
The messenger of death, the ghastly owl,  
With dreary shrieks did also her bewray ;  
And hungry wolves continually did howl  
At her abhorred face, so filthy and so foul.

Thence turning back in silence soft they stole,  
And brought the heavy corse with easy pace  
To yawning gulf of deep Avernus' hole :  
By that same hole an entrance, dark and base,  
With smoke and sulphur hiding all the place,  
Descends to hell : there creature never pass'd,  
That back returned, without heavenly grace,  
But dreadful furies, which their chains have brast, [burst]  
And damned sprites sent forth to make bad men aghast.

By that same way the direful dames do drive  
Their mournful chariot, filled with clotted blood,  
And down to Pluto's house are come bilive ; [forthwith]  
Which passing through, on every side them stood  
The trembling ghosts in sad amazed mood,  
Chattering their iron teeth, and staring wide  
With stony eyes ; and all the hellish brood  
Of fiends infernal flock'd on every side,  
To gaze on earthly wight, who with dark Night durst ride.

They pass the bitter waves of Acheron,  
Where many souls sit wailing woefully :  
And come to fiery flood of Phlegeton,  
Wherein the damned ghosts in torment fry,  
And with sharp shrilling shrieks do bootless cry,  
Cursing high Jove, who hath them thither sent.  
The house of endless Pain is built thereby,  
In which ten thousand sorts of punishment  
The cursed creatures do eternally torment.

Before the threshold, dreadful Cerberus  
His three deformed heads did lay along,  
Curled with thousand adders venomous,  
And lolled forth his bloody flaming tongue :  
At them he gan to rear his bristles strong,  
And sternly snarl, until Day's enemy  
Did him appease ; then down his tail he hung,  
And suffered them to pass on quietly :  
For she in hell and heaven had power equally.

There was Ixion turned on a wheel,  
 For daring tempt the queen of heaven to sin ;  
 And Sisyphus a huge round stone did reel  
 Against a hill, nor might from labour lin ; [rest]  
 There thirsty Tantalus hung by the chin ;  
 And Tityus fed a vulture on his maw ;  
 Typhæus' joints were stretched on a gin ;  
 Theseus condemned to endless sloth by law ;  
 And fifty sisters water in leaky vessels draw.

They all, beholding worldly wights in place,  
 Leave off their work, unmindful of their smart,  
 To gaze on them ; who forth by them do pace,  
 Till they be come unto the furthest part ;  
 Where was a cavern wrought with wondrous art,  
 Deep, dark, uneasy, doleful, comfortless,  
 In which sad Esculapius far apart  
 Imprisoned was, in chains remediless ;  
 Because Hippolytus' rent corse he did redress.

Hippolytus a jolly huntsman was,  
 Who did in chariot chace the foaming boar ;  
 He all his peers in beauty did surpass,  
 Yet ladies' love, as loss of time, forbore ;  
 His wanton stepdame loved him the more ;  
 But when she saw her offered sweets refused,  
 Her love she turned to hate, and him before  
 His father fierce of treason false accused,  
 And with her jealous terms his open ears abused :

Who, all enraged, his sea-god sire besought  
 Some cursed vengeance on his son to cast :  
 From surging gulf two monsters straight were brought ;  
 With dread whereof his hunting steeds aghast  
 Both chariot swift and huntsman overcast :  
 His goodly corpse on ragged cliffs was rent  
 And quite dismembered ; all his limbs were cast  
 Upon the dreary mountains as he went ;  
 So of Hippolytus was left no monument.

His cruel stepdame, seeing what was done,  
 Her wicked days with wretched knife did end,  
 In death avowing th' innocence of her son.  
 Which hearing, his rash sire began to rend  
 His hair, and hasty tongue that did offend :  
 Then gathering up the relics of his smart,  
 By Dian's means who was Hippolyte's friend,  
 To Esculapius brought, who by his art  
 Did heal them all again, and joined every part.

Such wondrous science in man's wit to reign,  
 When Jove perceived, which could the dead revive,  
 And fates expired could renew again,  
 Of endless life he would not him deprive,  
 But into hell did thrust him down alive,  
 With flashing thunderbolt much wounded sore ;  
 Where long remaining, he did always strive  
 Himself with salves to health for to restore,  
 And alake the heavenly fire that raged evermore.

There ancient Night arriving, did alight  
 From her nigh-weary wain, and in her arms  
 To Esculapius brought the wounded knight ;  
 Whom having softly disarrayed of arms,  
 She did to him discover all his harms,  
 Beseeching him with prayer all mixed with praise,  
 If either salves, or oils, or herbs, or charms,  
 A foredone wight from door of death could raise,  
 He would at her request prolong her nephew's days.

' Ah dame,' quoth he, ' thou temptest me in vain  
 ' To dare the thing, which daily yet I rue,  
 ' And the old cause of my continued pain,  
 ' With like attempt and like effect renew.  
 ' Is't not enough, that, thrust from heavenly dew,  
 ' Here endless penance for one fault I pay ;  
 ' But that redoubled crime with vengeance new  
 ' Thou biddest me to add ? Can Night defray  
 ' The wrath of thundering Jove who rules both Night and Day ?'

' Not so,' quoth she, ' but since that heaven's king  
 ' From hope of heaven hath thee excluded quite,  
 ' Why fearest thou who canst not hope for thing ?  
 ' And fear'st thou not that I thee punish might,  
 ' Now in the power of everlasting Night ?  
 ' Go to, then, O thou far-renowned son  
 ' Of great Apollo, shew thy famous might  
 ' In medicine, that erst hath to thee won  
 ' Great pains and greater praise, both never to be done.'

Her words prevailed ; and then the learned leech [surgeon]  
 His cunning hand unto the wounds did lay,  
 And all things else the which his art did teach ;  
 Which having seen, from thence arose away  
 The mother of dread Darkness, and let stay  
 AVEUGLE's son there in the leech's care :  
 And, back returning, took her wonted way  
 To run her timely race, whilst Phœbus fair  
 In western waves his weary wagon did repair.

The false DRESSA, leaving noisome Night,  
 Returned to stately palace of dame PRIDE,  
 Where, when she came, she found the REDCROSS knight  
 Departed thence; although his gashes wide  
 Not healed were, nor ready he to ride.  
 Good cause he had to hasten thence away;  
 For on a day his wary dwarf had spied  
 Where, in a dungeon deep, vast numbers lay  
 Of wretched captive thralls, who wailed night and day:

A rueful sight as could be seen with eye;  
 And he had learnt of them, in secret wise,  
 The hidden cause of their captivity;  
 How mortgaging their lives to covetise, [avarice]  
 Through wasteful pride and wanton riotise, [rioting]  
 They were, by law of that proud tyranness,  
 Provoked with Wrath and Envy's false surmise,  
 Condemned to that dungeon merciless,  
 Where they should live in woe, and die in wretchedness.

There was the great proud king of Babylon,  
 Who would compel all nations to adore,  
 And him, as only God, to call upon;  
 Till by celestial doom thrown out of door,  
 Into an ox he was transformed of yore.  
 There also was king Cræsus, who enhanced  
 His heart too high, through his great riches' store;  
 And proud Antiochus, who erst advanced  
 His cursed hand 'gainst God, and on his altars danced.

And them long time before, great Nimrod was,  
 The first to strive with warlike force arrayed;  
 And after him old Ninus far did pass  
 In princely pomp, by all the world obeyed.  
 There also was that mighty monarch laid  
 Low under all, yet above all in pride,  
 Who did the name of his own sire upbraid,  
 And would as Ammon's son be magnified;  
 Till, scorned of God and man, a shameful death he died.

All these together in one heap were thrown,  
 Like carcasses of beasts in butcher's stall:  
 And in another corner wide were strown  
 The ancient ruins of the Romans' fall;  
 Great Romulus, the grandsire of them all;  
 Proud Tarquin; and too lordly Lentulus;  
 Stout Scipio; and stubborn Hannibal;  
 Ambitious Sylla; and stern Marius;  
 High Cæsar; great Pompey; and fierce Antonius—

Among these mighty men were women mix'd,  
 Proud women, vain, forgetful of their yoke ;  
 The bold Semiramis, whose sides transfix'd  
 With son's own blade, her foul reproaches spoke ;  
 Fair Sthenobæa, who herself did choke  
 With fatal cord, for wanting of her will ;  
 High-minded Cleopatra, who with stroke  
 Of an asp's sting herself did proudly kill ;  
 And thousands more the like, who did that dungeon fill ;

Besides the endless crowds of wretched thralls,  
 Who thither were assembled night and day,  
 From all the world, after their woeful falls,  
 Through wicked pride and wasted wealth's decay.  
 But most of those, who in that dungeon lay,  
 Fell from high princes' courts or ladies' bowers,  
 Where they, in idle pomp or wanton play,  
 Consumed had their goods and thriftless hours ;  
 And lastly thrown themselves into these heavy stours. [griefs]

Whose cases when the careful dwarf had told,  
 And made example of their woeful sight  
 Unto his master, he no longer would  
 There dwell in peril of like painful plight,  
 But early rose ; and ere the dawning light  
 Discovered had the world to heaven wide,  
 He by a private postern took his flight,  
 That by no envious eyes he might be spied :  
 For, doubtless, death ensued if any him descried.

Scarce could he footing find in that foul way,  
 For many corpses, rudely heaped all,  
 Of murdered men, which therein strowed lay,  
 Without remorse or decent funeral ;  
 Who all through that great princess, PRIDE did fall,  
 And came to shameful end : and them beside,  
 While riding underneath the castle wall,  
 A dunghill of dead carcasses he spied,  
 The dreadful spectacle of that sad house of PRIDE.

## CANTO VI.

From lawless lust, by wondrous grace,  
 Fair Una is releas'd ;  
 Whom savage nation does adore,  
 And learns her wise behest.

As when a ship that flies fair under way  
 A hidden rock escapes, which unawares  
 Lay there as helpless wreck her to betray ;  
 The mariner yet half amazed stares  
 At peril past, and yet in doubt not dares  
 To joy at his deliv'rance, hair-breadth slight :  
 So doubly is distress'd twixt joy and cares,  
 The dreadless courage of this REDCROSS knight,  
 Having escaped such sad examples in his sight.

Yet sad he was that, in his hasty speed,  
 The fair DUESSA he had left behind ;  
 And yet more sad that UNA, his dear dread,  
 Her truth had stained with treason so unkind ;  
 Yet crime in her could never creature find :  
 But for his love, and for her own self's sake,  
 She wandered had from one to other Inde,  
 Him for to seek, nor ever would forsake,  
 Till unawares fierce SANSLOY did her overtake :

Who, after ARCHIMAGO's foul defeat,  
 Led her away into a forest wild :  
 And, turning wrathful fire to lustful heat,  
 With beastly sin thought her to have defiled,  
 And made the vassal of his pleasures vilde. [vile]  
 Yet first he tried by treaty and by trains, [deceits]  
 Her to persuade that stubborn fort to yield :  
 For greater conquest of hard love he gains,  
 Who works it to his will, than he who it constrains.

With fawning words he courted her awhile ;  
 And looking lovely, and oft sighing sore,  
 Her constant heart did tempt with diverse guile :  
 But words and looks and sighs she did abhor ;  
 As rock of diamond stedfast evermore.  
 Yet, for to feed his fiery lustful eye,  
 He snatch'd the veil that hung her face before ;  
 Then did her beauty shine as brightest sky,  
 And burnt his beastly heart to enforce her chastity.

But when he saw his flattering arts to fail,  
 And subtle engines beat from battery ;  
 With greedy force he did the fort assail,  
 Whereof he hoped possessed soon to be,  
 And win rich spoil of ransacked chastity.  
 Ah heavens ! that do his hideous art behold,  
 And heavenly virgin thus outraged see,  
 How can ye vengeance just so long withhold,  
 And hurl not flashing flames upon that Pagan bold ?

The piteous maiden, fearful, comfortless,  
 Does throw out thrilling shrieks and shrieking cries,  
 The last vain help of woman's great distress,  
 And with loud complaints importuneth the skies :  
 The molten stars do drop like weeping eyes,  
 And Phœbus, flying that most shameful sight,  
 His blushing face in foggy cloud implies,  
 And hides for shame. What wit of mortal wight  
 Can now devise to free a thrall from such a plight ?

Eternal Providence, surpassing thought,  
 Where none appears, can make itself a way ;  
 A wondrous way it for this lady wrought,  
 From lion's claws to pluck the feeble prey.  
 Her shrill outcries and shrieks so loud did bray,  
 That all the woods and forests did resound ;  
 A troop of fawns and satyrs far away  
 Within the wood were dancing in a round,  
 Where old Sylvanus slept in shady arbour sound :

Who when they heard that piteous strained voice,  
 In haste forsook their rural merriment,  
 And running toward the far rebounded noise,  
 To learn who did so dolefully lament,  
 Unto the place they come incontinent :  
 Whom when the raging Saracen espied,  
 A rude misshapen monstrous rabblement,  
 Whose like he never saw, he durst not bide,  
 But got his ready steed, and fast away did ride.

The wild wood gods, arrived in the place,  
 There find the virgin, doleful, desolate,  
 With ruffled garments, and fair blubbered face,  
 As her outrageous foe had left her late,  
 And trembling yet through fear of former hate.  
 All stand amazed at so strange a sight,  
 And much did pity her unhappy state ;  
 They stand astonished at her beauty bright,  
 In their rude eyes unworthy of such woeful plight.

She, more amazed, in double dread doth dwell,  
And every tender limb for fear doth shake.  
As when a greedy wolf through hunger fell,  
A silly lamb far from the flock does take,  
Of which he means his bloody feast to make,  
A lion spies fast running towards him,  
Th' innocent prey in haste he does forsake ;  
Which, quit from death, yet quakes in every limb,  
With change of fear, to see the lion look so grim.

Such fearful fit had seized her trembling heart,  
Nor words to speak, nor joint to move, she had :  
The savage nation feel her secret smart,  
And read her sorrow in her count'nance sad ;  
Their frowning foreheads, with rough horns beclad,  
And rustic horror, all aside do lay ;  
And gently grinning, show a semblance glad,  
To comfort her, and fear to put away :  
Shewing, on bended knees, that her they will obey.

The doubtful damsel dare not yet commit  
Her single person to their barbarous truth ;  
But still twixt fear and hope amazed doth sit,  
Knowing what harm to hasty trust ensu'th.  
They, in compassion to her tender youth,  
And wonder of her beauty sovereign,  
Are won with pity and unwonted ruth ;  
And, prostrate all upon the lowly plain,  
Do kiss her feet, and fawn on her with count'nance fain.

Their hearts she guesseth by their humble guise,  
And yields her to extremity of time ;  
So from the ground she fearless doth arise,  
And walketh forth without suspect of crime :  
They all, as glad as birds of joyous prime,  
Thence led her forth, about her dancing round,  
Shouting, and singing all a shepherd's rhyme ;  
And, with green branches strèwing all the ground,  
They worship her as queen, with olive garland crowned.

And all the way their merry pipes they sound,  
That all the woods with double echo ring ;  
And with their horned feet do beat the ground,  
Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant spring.  
So toward old Sylvanus they her bring ;  
Who, with the noise awaked, cometh out  
To learn the cause, his weak steps governing,  
And aged limbs, on staff of cypress stout ;  
And with an ivy band his waist is girt about.



Far off he wonders what makes them so glad,  
 Or Bacchus' merry fruit they did invent, [and]  
 Or Cybele's frantic rites have made them mad :  
 They, drawing nigh, unto their god present  
 That flower of faith and beauty excellent :  
 The god himself, viewing that mirror rare,  
 Stood long amazed, and doubtful of intent :  
 His own fair Dryope now he thinks not fair,  
 And Pholoe foul, when her to this he doth compare.

The wood-born people fall before her flat,  
 And worship her as goddess of the wood ;  
 And old Sylvanus self bethinks not, what  
 To think of one so fair ; but gazing stood  
 In doubt to deem her sprung from earthly brood :  
 Sometimes dame Venus self he seems to see ;  
 Yet Venus never had so sober mood :  
 Sometimes Diana he her takes to be ;  
 But misseth bow and shafts, and buskins to her knee.

He, viewing her, beginneth to revive  
 His ancient love for dearest Cypariss,  
 And calls to mind his portraiture alive,  
 How fair he was, yet not so fair as this ;  
 And how he slew with glancing dart amiss  
 A gentle hind, which that beloved boy  
 Did love as life, above all worldly bliss ;  
 For grief whereof he could not after joy,  
 But pined away in anguish and selfwilled annoy.

The woody nymphs, fair Hamadryades,  
 Her to behold do thither run apace ;  
 And all the troop of light-foot Naiades  
 Flock all about to see her lovely face :  
 But, having viewed well her heavenly grace,  
 They envy her in their malicious mind,  
 And flee away for fear of foul disgrace :  
 But all the Satyrs scorn their woody kind,  
 And henceforth nothing fair but her on earth they find.

Glad of such luck, the luckless lucky maid  
 Did her content to please their feeble eyes ;  
 And long time with the savage people stayed,  
 To have repose awhile from miseries :  
 During which time her gentle wit she tries  
 To teach them truth, who worshipp'd her in vain,  
 And to her paid their blind idolatries :  
 But, when their bootless zeal she did restrain  
 From worshipping herself, her ass they'd worship fain.

It happened now a noble warlike knight,  
 By just occasion, to that forest came,  
 To seek his kindred, and the lineage right,  
 From whence he took his well-deserved name :  
 He had in arms abroad won noble fame,  
 And filled far lands with glory of his might ;  
 Plain, faithful, true, and enemy of shame,  
 He ever loved to fight for ladies' right,  
 But in vain glorious frays he little did delight.

A satyr's offspring, born in forest wild,  
 By strange adventure as it did betide,  
 And there begotten of a lady mild,  
 Fair Thyamis, the daughter of Labride,  
 Who was in sacred bands of wedlock tied  
 To Therion, a loose unruly swain,  
 Who had more joy to range the forest wide,  
 And chase the savage beast with busy pain,  
 Than serve his lady's love, and waste in pleasures vain.

The forlorn maid did with affection burn,  
 And could not lack her husband's company ;  
 But to the wood she goes, to serve her turn,  
 And seek her spouse, who from her still does fly,  
 And other game pursues right merrily.  
 A satyr chanced her wandering to find,  
 And, when her beauty caught his brutish eye,  
 The loyal links of wedlock did unbind,  
 And made her person thrall unto his beastly kind.

So long in secret cabin there he held  
 Her captive to his sensual desire,  
 Till that the fruit thereof he had beheld :  
 A boy she bore unto that savage sire :  
 Then home he her permitted to retire,  
 For ransom leaving him the late-born child,  
 Whom, till to riper years he did aspire,  
 He trained up in life and manners wild,  
 Amongst wild beasts and woods, from laws of men exiled.

For all he taught his tender son was but  
 To banish cowardice and bastard fear ;  
 His trembling hand he forced him to put  
 Upon the lion and the rugged bear,  
 And from the she-bear's teats her whelps to tear ;  
 And huge wild roaring bulls he would him make  
 To tame, and ride their backs not made to bear ;  
 The roebucks too in flight to overtake :  
 And every beast for fear of him did fly and quake.

Thereby so fearless and so fell he grew,  
 That his own sire who had him taught this guise, [habit]  
 Did often tremble at the horrid view,  
 And oft, for dread of hurt, would him advise  
 The angry beasts not rashly to despise,  
 Nor too much to provoke; for he would learn  
 Lions to stoop to him in lowly wise,  
 And make the tigers fierce and leopards stern  
 Leave roaring, when in rage they for revenge did yearn.

And to assert his power still the more,  
 Wild beasts in iron yokes he would compel,  
 The spotted panther and the tusked boar,  
 The leopard swift, and the tiger cruel,  
 The antelope, and wolf both fierce and fell;  
 And them constrain an equal yoke to draw.  
 Such joy he had their stubborn hearts to quell,  
 And sturdy courage tame with dreadful awe,  
 That his behests they feared, as a fell tyrant's law.'

His loving mother came upon a day  
 Unto the woods to see her little son,  
 And unawares did meet him in the way,  
 After his sports and cruel pastime done,  
 When after him a lioness did run,  
 And roaring all with rage did loud requere [require]  
 Her children dear, which he away had won :  
 The lion's whelps she saw now he did bear,  
 And lull in rugged arms, devoid of childish fear.

The fearful dame all quaked at the sight,  
 And turning back began to flee away,  
 Until, with love revoked from vain affright,  
 She hardly was persuaded yet to stay,  
 And then these women's words began to say ;  
 ' Ah, SATYRANE, my darling and my joy,  
 ' For love of me leave off this dreadful play ;  
 ' To dally thus with death is no fit toy :  
 ' Go find some other play fellows, my own sweet boy.'

In these and like delights of bloody game,  
 He trained was till riper years he raught. [reached]  
 He there abode, whilst any beast of name  
 Walked in that forest, which he had not taught  
 To fear his force : and then his courage haught [high]  
 Desired of foreign foeman to be known,  
 And far abroad for strange adventures sought ;  
 In which his might was never overthrown,  
 But through all Fairy land his famous worth was blown.

Yet evermore it was his manner fair,  
 After long labours and adventures spent,  
 Unto those native forests to repair,  
 To see his sire and kindred ancient.  
 And now he thither came with like intent,  
 And unawares the fairest UNA found,  
 Strange lady, in so strange habiliment,  
 Teaching the satyrs, which her sat around,  
 True sacred lore, which from her sweet lips did redound.

He wondered at her wisdom heavenly rare,  
 Whose like in women's wit he never knew ;  
 And, when her courteous deeds he did compare,  
 Began t' admire and her sad sorrows rue :  
 He blamed Fortune which such troubles threw,  
 And joyed to prove her crushing cruelty  
 On gentle dame, so harmless and so true.  
 Thenceforth he kept her goodly company,  
 And learnt her discipline of faith and verity.

Yet she, devoted to the REDCROSS knight,  
 Her wandering peril closely did lament,  
 Nor in his new acquaintance could delight ;  
 But her dear heart with anguish did torment,  
 And all her wit in secret counsel spent,  
 How to escape. At last in privy wise  
 To SATYRANE she shewed her intent ;  
 Who, glad to gain such favour, did devise  
 How with that pensive maid he best might thence arise.

So on a day when satyrs all were gone  
 To do their service to Sylvanus old,  
 The gentle virgin, left behind alone,  
 He led away with courage stout and bold.  
 Too late it was when satyrs it were told,  
 Nor could they hope recover her again :  
 In vain he seeks who, having, cannot hold.  
 So fast he carried her with careful pain,  
 That they the woods are past, and come now to the plain.

The better part now of the lingering day  
 They travelled had, when at the last they spied  
 A weary wight who wandered in the way,  
 And toward him began in haste to ride,  
 To hear of news that did abroad betide,  
 Or haply of her knight of the red Cross :  
 But he, descrying them, did turn aside  
 For fear, as seemed, or for some feigned loss ;  
 More greedy they of news, fast toward him do cross.

A silly man, in simple weeds long worn,  
 And soiled with dust of the long dried way ;  
 His sandals were with toilsome travel torn,  
 His face all tann'd with scorching sunny ray,  
 For he had journeyed many a summer's day,  
 Through boiling sands of Araby and Inde ;  
 And in his hand a Jacob's staff, to stay  
 His weary limbs upon ; and safe behind  
 His scrip did hang, in which his needments he did bind.

The knight, approaching nigh, of him inquired [inquired]  
 Tidings of war and of adventures new ;  
 But wars, nor new adventures, none he heard.  
 Then UNA did him ask if aught he knew  
 Or heard abroad of that her champion true,  
 Who in his armour bear a crosslet red.  
 ' Ah me ! dear dame,' quoth he, ' well may I rue  
 ' To tell the dismal sight mine eyes have read ;  
 ' These eyes did see that knight both living and then dead.'

That cruel word her tender heart so thrill'd,  
 That sudden cold did run through every vein,  
 And stony horror all her senses filled  
 With dying fit, that down she fell for pain.  
 The gentle knight uplifted her again,  
 And comforted with courteous kind relief :  
 Then, won from death, she bade him tell more plain  
 The further process of her hidden grief :  
 The lesser pangs can bear, who hath endured the chief.

Then spake the pilgrim thus, ' I chanced this day,  
 ' This fatal day, which I shall ever rue,  
 ' To see two knights, in travel on my way,  
 ' Arranged, a sorry sight, in battle new,  
 ' Both breathing vengeance, both of wrathful hue ;  
 ' My fearful flesh did tremble at their strife,  
 ' To see their blades so greedily imbrue ;  
 ' That, drunk with blood, yet thirsted after life ;  
 ' What more ? the REDCROSS knight was slain with Pagan knife.'

' Ah dearest lord,' quoth she, ' how might that be,  
 ' And he the stoutest knight that ever won ?'  
 ' Ah dearest dame,' quoth he, ' how could I see  
 ' The thing that might not be, and yet was done ?'  
 ' Where is,' said SATYRANE, ' that Pagan's son,  
 ' Who him of life and us of joy hath reft ?'  
 ' Not far away,' quoth he, ' from hence doth won, [stay]  
 ' Close by a fountain, where I late him left,  
 ' Washing his bloody wounds, which by the steel were cleft.'

Therewith the knight thence marched forth in haste,  
 While UNA, with huge heaviness oppress'd,  
 Could not for sorrow follow him so fast ;  
 And soon he came, as he the place had guess'd,  
 Wherein that Pagan proud himself did rest,  
 In secret shadow, by a fountain side :  
 Even he it was who erst would have suppress'd  
 Fair UNA : him when SATYRANE espied,  
 With foul reproachful words, he boldly him defied ;

And said, ' Arise thou cursed miscreant,  
 ' Who hast with knightless guile and treacherous train,  
 ' Fair knighthood foully shamed, and dost vaunt  
 ' That good knight of the red Cross to have slain :  
 ' Arise, and with like treason now maintain  
 ' Thy guilty wrong, or else thee guilty yield.'  
 The Saracen, this hearing, rose amain,  
 And, catching up in haste his three-square shield  
 And shining helmet, soon was buckled for the field ;

And drawing nigh him, said, ' Ah, misborn elf,  
 ' In evil hour thy foes thee hither sent,  
 ' Another's wrong to wreak upon thyself :  
 ' Yet ill thou blamest me for having blent  
 ' My name with guile and traitorous intent :  
 ' That REDCROSS knight I swear I never slew ;  
 ' But had he been where erst his arms were lent,  
 ' Th' enchanter vain his error should not rue :  
 ' But thou his error shalt, I hope, prove forthwith true.'

They then began, both furious and fell,  
 To thunder blows, and fiercely to assail ;  
 Each other bent his enemy to quell ;  
 That with their force they pierced both plate and mail,  
 And made wide furrows in their bodies frail,  
 Which would great pity draw from any eye :  
 Large floods of blood adown their sides did rail ;  
 But floods of blood could not them satisfy,  
 Both hungered after death ; both chose to win or die.

So long they fight, and full revenge pursue,  
 That fainting, each to breathe the other let,  
 And oft refreshed, the battle oft renew.  
 As when two boars, with rankling malice met,  
 Their gory sides fresh bleeding fiercely fret,  
 Till breathless both themselves aside retire,  
 Where, foaming wrath, their cruel tusks they whet,  
 Trampling the earth, the whiles they may respire ;  
 Then back to fight again, new breathed and entire.

So fiercely, when these knights had breathed once,  
 They to the fight return ; increasing more  
 Their mighty force and cruel rage at once,  
 And heaped strokes more hugely than before ;  
 That, with their dreary wounds and bloody gore,  
 So much deformed, they scarcely could be known.  
 By this, sad UNA, fraught with anguish sore,  
 Led with their noise which through the air was thrown,  
 Arrived where they on earth their fruitless blood had sown.

Whom, all as soon as that proud Saracen  
 Espied, having revived the memory  
 Of his lewd lusts and late attempted sin,  
 He left the doubtful battle hastily,  
 To catch her, newly offered to his eye :  
 But SATYRANE, with strokes him turning, stayed,  
 And sternly bade him other business ply,  
 Nor hunt the steps of pure unspotted maid ;  
 Wherewith he all enraged those bitter speeches said ;

‘ O foolish satyr’s son, what fury mad  
 ‘ Hath thee incensed to haste thy doleful fate ?  
 ‘ Were it not better I that lady had  
 ‘ Than that thou should’st repent of it too late :  
 ‘ Most senseless man is he who self doth hate,  
 ‘ To love another : lo, then, for thine aid,  
 ‘ Here take thy lover’s token on thy pate.’  
 So they to fight ; while that the royal maid  
 Fled far away, of that proud Pagan sore afraid.

But that false pilgrim, which the leasing told,  
 Being indeed old ARCHIMAGO, did stay  
 In secret shadow, all this to behold,  
 And much rejoiced in their bloody fray ;  
 But when he saw the damsel pass away,  
 He left his stand, and her pursued apace,  
 In hope to bring her to her last decay.  
 But for to tell her lamentable case,  
 And this fell battle’s end, will need another place.

## CANTO VII.

The Redcross knight is captive made,  
 By giant proud oppress;  
 Prince Arthur meets with Una greatly  
 With these news distrest.

What man so wise, what earthly wit so ware,  
 As to descry the crafty cunning train, [wile]  
 By which Deceit doth mask in visor fair,  
 And make her colours, dyed deep in grain,  
 To seem like Truth, whose shape she well can feign,  
 And fitting gestures to her purpose frame,  
 The guiltless man with guile to entertain?  
 Great mistress of her art was that false dame,  
 The false DUESSA, cloked with FIDESSA's name.

Who when, returning from the dreary Night,  
 She found not in that perilous house of PAIDE,  
 Where she had left, the noble REDCROSS knight,  
 Her hoped prey, she would no longer bide,  
 But forth she went to seek him far and wide.  
 Ere long she found where he had weary sat  
 To rest himself, close by a fountain side,  
 Disarmed all of iron-coated plate;  
 And by his side his steed the grassy forage ate.

He feeds upon the cooling shade, and bays [bathes]  
 His sweaty forehead in the breathing wind,  
 Which through the trembling leaves full gently plays,  
 Wherein the cheerful birds of sundry kind  
 Do chant sweet music to delight his mind:  
 The witch approaching did him fairly greet,  
 And with reproach of carelessness unkind  
 Upbraid, for leaving her in place unmeet,  
 With foul words tempering fair, sour gall with honey sweet.

Unkindness past, they did of solace treat,  
 And bathe in pleasures of the joyous shade,  
 Which shielded them against the boiling heat,  
 And with green boughs decking a gloomy shade,  
 About the fountain like a garland made;  
 Whose bubbling wave did ever freshly well,  
 Nor ever would through fervent summer fade:  
 The sacred nymph who there was wont to dwell,  
 Was out of Dian's favour, as it then befell.



The cause was this : one day when Phœbe fair,  
With all her band, was following the chase,  
This nymph, quite tired with heat of scorching air,  
Sat down to rest in midst of the race :  
The goddess wroth did foully her disgrace,  
And bade the waters, which from her did flow,  
Be such as she herself was then in place.  
Thenceforth the waters waxed dull and slow,  
And all who drink thereof do faint and feeble grow,

Hereof this gentle knight unknowing was ;  
And lying down upon the sandy grail, [grave]  
Drunk of the stream, as clear as crystal glass ;  
Forthwith his manly force began to fail,  
And mighty strong was turned to feeble frail.  
His changed powers at first themselves not felt ;  
Till curdling cold his courage did assail,  
And cheerful blood in fainting chill did melt,  
Which like an ague fit through all his body swelt. [sweltered]

Yet goodly court he made still to his dame,  
Stretched in laziness upon the ground,  
Careless alike of health and of his fame :  
Till at the last he heard a dreadful sound,  
Which through the wood loud bellowing did rebound,  
That all the earth for terror seemed to shake,  
And trees did tremble. The knight, therewith astound,  
Upstarting lightly from his looser make,  
Did his unready weapons begin in hand to take.

But ere he could his armour on him dight, [put]  
Or get his shield, his monstrous enemy,  
With sturdy steps, came stalking in his sight ;  
A hideous giant, horrible and high,  
Who with his tallness seemed to threat the sky ;  
The ground did groan beneath his feet for dread :  
His living like saw never living eye,  
Nor durst behold : his stature did exceed  
The height of three the tallest sons of mortal seed.

The greatest Earth his uncouth mother was,  
And blustering Æolus his boasted sire,  
Who with his breath, which through the world doth pass,  
Her hollow womb did secretly inspire,  
And filled her hidden caves with stormy ire ;  
So she conceived ; and trebling the due time  
In which the birth of mortals doth transpire,  
Brought forth this monstrous mass of earthly slime,  
Puff'd up with empty wind, and filled with sinful crime.

So growing great, through arrogant delight  
 Of the high parentage whence he was born,  
 And through presumption of his matchless might,  
 All other powers and knighthood he did scorn.  
 Such now he marcheth to this man forlorn,  
 And left to loss ; his stalking steps are stayed  
 Upon a snaggy oak, which he had torn  
 Out of his mother's bowels, and of it made  
 A mortal mace, wherewith his foeman he dismayed.

And when the knight he saw, he did advance  
 With striding steps along and force amain,  
 And towards him with dreadful fury prance ;  
 Who hapless and all hopeless, did in vain  
 To him approach, sad battle to darrayne, [hazard]  
 Disarmed, disgraced, and inwardly dismayed :  
 So faint he was in every joint and vein,  
 Through that false fountain which him feeble made,  
 That scarcely could he wield his bootless single blade.

The giant aimed a stroke so merciless,  
 That could have overthrown a stony tower ;  
 And, but for heavenly grace which did him bless,  
 He had been powdered all as thin as flour ;  
 But he was wary of that deadly stour, [crash]  
 And lightly leaped from underneath the blow :  
 Yet so prodigious was the villian's power,  
 That with the wind it did him overthrow,  
 And all his senses stunned, that there he lay full low :

As when that devilish iron engine, wrought  
 In deepest hell, and framed by furies' skill,  
 With windy nitre and quick sulphur fraught,  
 And ramm'd with bullet round, ordained to kill,  
 Conceiveth fire, the heavens it doth fill  
 With thundering noise, and all the air doth choke,  
 That none can breathe nor see nor hear at will,  
 Through smouldering cloud of duskish stinking smoke,  
 The breath of which him daunts, who hath escaped the stroke.

So daunted when the giant saw the knight,  
 His heavy hand he heaved up on high,  
 And him to dust thought to have battered quite ;  
 Until DUESSA loud to him did cry,  
 ' O great ORSOGLIO, greatest under sky,  
 ' Oh ! hold thy mortal hand for lady's sake ;  
 ' Hold for my sake, and do him not to die,  
 ' But, vanquished, thine eternal bondslave make,  
 ' And me, thy worthy meed, unto thy bosom take.'

He hearkened, and did stay from further harms,  
 To gain so goodly guerdon as she spake ;  
 So willingly she came into his arms,  
 Who her as willingly to grace did take,  
 Much pleased to possess his new-found mate.  
 Then up he took the slumbering senseless corse,  
 And, ere he could out of his swoon awake,  
 Him to his castle brought with hasty force,  
 And in a dungeon deep him threw without remorse.

From that day forth DUESSA was his dear,  
 And highly honoured in his haughty eye.  
 He gave her gold, and purple pall to wear,  
 And triple crown set on her head full high,  
 And her endowed with royal majesty :  
 Then, for to make her dreaded more of men,  
 And peoples' hearts with awful terror tie,  
 A monstrous beast, first bred in filthy fen,  
 He chose, which he had kept long time in darksome den.

Such one it was as that renowned snake,  
 Which great Alcides in Stermna slew,  
 Long fostered in the filth of Lerna lake ;  
 Whose many heads, out-budding ever new,  
 Did breed him endless labour to subdue.  
 But this same monster much more ugly was,  
 For seven great heads out of his body grew :  
 An iron beast, and back of scaly brass,  
 And, all embrued with blood, his eyes did shine as glass.

His tail was stretched out in wondrous length,  
 That to the house of heavenly gods it raught ; [reached]  
 And, with extorted power and borrowed strength,  
 The ever-burning lamps from thence it brought,  
 And proudly threw to ground as things of naught ;  
 And underneath his filthy feet did tread  
 The sacred things, nor for God's laws cared aught.  
 Upon this dreadful beast, with sevenfold head,  
 He set the false DUESSA, for more awe and dread.

The woeful dwarf, who saw his master fall,  
 While he had keeping of his grazing steed,  
 The valiant knight become a captive thrall,  
 When all was past, took up his forlorn weed ;  
 His mighty armour, missing most in need ;  
 His silver shield, now idle, masterless ;  
 His poignant spear, that many made to bleed :  
 The rueful monuments of heaviness,  
 And with them all departs, to tell his great distress.

He had not travelled long, when on the way,  
 He woeful lady, woeful UNA, met,  
 Fast flying from that Pagan's greedy prey,  
 Whilst SATYRANE him from pursuit did let;  
 Who when her eyes she on the dwarf had set,  
 And saw the signs which deadly tidings spake,  
 She fell to ground with sorrowful regret,  
 And living breath her sad breast did forsake,  
 Yet might her piteous heart be seen to pant and quake.

The messenger of such unhappy news  
 Would fain have died; dead was his heart within;  
 Yet outwardly some little comfort shews;  
 At last, recovering heart, he does begin  
 To rub her temples and to chafe her chin,  
 And every tender limb does toss and turn;  
 So hard it is the flitted life to win  
 Unto her native prison to return:  
 Then 'gins her grieved ghost thus to lament and mourn;

'Ye dreary instruments of cruel sight,  
 Which do this dreadly spectacle behold,  
 Why do ye longer feed on loathed light,  
 Or pleasure find to gaze on earthly mould,  
 Since cruel Fates the careful thread unfold,  
 The which my life and love together tied?  
 Now let the stony dart of senseless cold  
 Pierce to my heart, and pass through every side;  
 And let eternal night so sad sight from me hide.'

'O lightsome Day, the lamp of highest Jove,  
 First made by him men's wandering ways to guide,  
 When darkness he in deepest dungeon drove,  
 Henceforth thy hated face for ever hide,  
 And shut up heaven's windows shining wide;  
 For earthly sight can nought but sorrow breed,  
 And late repentance, which shall long abide.  
 Mine eyes no more on vanity shall feed,  
 But, sealed up in death, shall have their deadly meed.'

Then down again she fell unto the ground;  
 But he her quickly reared up again.  
 Thrice did she sink thus down in deadly swoon, [swoon]  
 And thrice he her revived with busy pain.  
 At last when life recovered had the rein,  
 And overwrestled his strong enemy,  
 With faltering tongue, and trembling every vein,  
 'Tell on,' quoth she, 'the woeful tragedy,  
 The which these reliques sad present unto mine eye.'

' Tempestuous Fortune hath spent all her spite,  
 ' And thrilling Sorrow thrown his utmost dart :  
 ' Thy sad tongue cannot tell more heavy plight  
 ' Than that I feel and harbour in my heart :  
 ' Who hath endured the whole can bear each part.  
 ' If death it be, it is not the first wound  
 ' Which pierced hath my breast with bleeding smart.  
 ' Begin, and end the bitter baleful stound ; [crisis]  
 ' If less than what I fear, more favour I have found.'

Then did the dwarf the whole discourse declare ;  
 The subtle wiles of ARCHIMAGO old ;  
 The wanton loves of false FIDESSA fair,  
 Bought with the blood of vanquished Pagan bold ;  
 The wretched pair transformed to trees in mould :  
 The house of PAIDE, and perils round about ;  
 The combat which he with SANJOY did hold ;  
 The luckless conflict with the giant stout,  
 Whereby captived, of life or death he stood in doubt.

She heard with patience all unto the end,  
 And strove to master sorrowful affray, [terror]  
 Which greater grew, the more she did contend,  
 And almost rent her tender heart in tway ; [two]  
 Her love fresh coals unto the fire did lay :  
 For greater love, the greater is the loss.  
 Never did lady love the dearest day  
 As she did love the knight of the red Cross,  
 For whose dear sake so many troubles her did toss.

At last when fervent sorrow slaked was,  
 She up arose, resolving him to find,  
 Alive or dead, and forward forth did pass,  
 All as the dwarf the way to her assigned ;  
 And evermore, in constant careful mind,  
 She fed her wound with fresh renewed bale.  
 Long tost with storms, and beat with bitter wind,  
 High over hills, and low adown the dale,  
 She wandered many a wood, and measured many a vale.

At last she chanced by good hap to meet  
 A goodly knight, fair marching by the way,  
 Together with his squire, arrayed meet :  
 His glittering armour shined far away,  
 Like glancing light of Phœbus' brightest ray :  
 From top to toe no place appeared bare,  
 That deadly dint of steel endanger may ;  
 Athwart his breast a baldrick brave he ware,  
 That shone, like twinkling stars, with gems most precious rare ;

And in the midst thereof, one precious stone  
 Of wondrous worth as well as wondrous nights,  
 Shaped like a lady's head, exceeding shone,  
 Like Hesperus among the lesser lights,  
 And strived to amaze the weaker sights ;  
 Thereby his mortal blade full comely hung  
 In ivory sheath, all carved with curious sleights,  
 Whose sheath was burnished gold, and handle strong  
 Of mother-pearl, and buckled with a golden tongue.

His haughty helmet, horrid all with gold,  
 Both admiration and great terror bred ;  
 For all the crest a dragon did enfold  
 With greedy paws, and over all did spread  
 His golden wings ; his dreadful hideous head,  
 Close couched on the beaver, seemed to throw  
 From flaming mouth bright sparkles fiery red,  
 That sudden horror to faint hearts did show,  
 And scaly tail was stretched adown his back full low.

Upon the top of all his lofty crest,  
 A bunch of hair discoloured diversely,  
 With sprinkled pearl and gold full richly drest,  
 Did shake, and seemed to dance for jollity ;  
 Like to an almond tree all mounted high  
 On top of green Salinis all alone,  
 With blossoms brave bedecked daintily ;  
 Whose tender branches tremble every one,  
 At every little breath that under heaven is blown.

His warlike shield all closely covered was,  
 Nor might of mortal eye be ever seen ;  
 Not made of steel nor of enduring brass ;  
 Such earthly metals soon consumed been ; [are]  
 But all of diamond perfect pure and clean,  
 It framed was, one massy entire mould,  
 Hewn out of adamant with engines keen :  
 No point of spear it ever pierced could,  
 Nor dint of direful sword divide the substance would.

The same to man he never would disclose,  
 Only when monsters huge he would dismay,  
 Or daunt unequal armies of his foes,  
 Or when the flying heavens he would affray :  
 For so exceeding shone its glistening ray,  
 That Phœbus' golden face it did attain,  
 As when a cloud his beams doth overlay ;  
 And silver Cynthia waxed pale and faint,  
 As when her face is stained by magic art's constraint.

No magic arts on it had any might,  
 Nor bloody words of bold enchanter's call ;  
 But all that was not such as seemed in sight  
 Before that shield did fade, and sudden fall :  
 And when he would the rascal crowds appal,  
 Men into stones therewith he could transmew, [transmute]  
 And stones to dust, and dust to nought at all :  
 And when he would the prouder looks subdue,  
 He could them gazing blind, or turn to other hue.

Nor let it seem that credence this exceeds ;  
 For he that made the same was known right well  
 To have done much more admirable deeds ;  
 It Merlin was, who 'foretime did excel  
 All living men in might of magic spell ;  
 Both shield and sword and armour, all he wrought  
 For this young prince, when first to arms he fell ;  
 But when he died, the FAIRY QUEEN it brought  
 To Fairy land, where yet it may be seen, if sought.

A gentle youth, his dearly loved squire,  
 His spear of ebon wood behind him bare,  
 Whose harmful head, thrice heated in the fire,  
 Had riven many a breast with pikehead square :  
 A goodly person, and could manage fair  
 His stubborn steed with curbed ruling bit,  
 Which under him did trample as the air,  
 And chafed that any on his back should sit ;  
 The iron rowels into frothy foam he bit.

Now when this knight nigh to the lady drew,  
 With loving court he did her entertain ;  
 But when he heard her answers loath, he knew  
 Some secret sorrow did her heart restrain ;  
 Which to assuage and calm her storming pain,  
 Fair soothing words he wisely did display,  
 And for her humour fitting purpose fain,  
 Did try if she the cause would now bewray ;  
 She, thus enmoved, began these bleeding words to say :

' What world's delight, or joy of living speech,  
 ' My heart, so plunged in sea of sorrows deep,  
 ' And heaped with such calamities, can reach ?  
 ' The careful cold beginneth for to creep,  
 ' And in my heart his iron arrow steep,  
 ' Soon as I think upon my bitter bale.  
 ' Such helpless harms 'tis best untold to keep,  
 ' Nor rip up grief, when it may nought avail :  
 ' My only comfort is my woes to weep and wail.'

' Ah, lady dear,' quoth then the gentle knight,  
 ' Well may I guess your grief is wondrous great ;  
 ' For grief exceeding great groans in my sprite,  
 ' While thus I hear you of your sorrows treat.  
 ' But, woeful lady, let me you entreat  
 ' To tell to me the anguish of your heart :  
 ' Mishaps are mastered by advice discreet,  
 ' And counsel mitigates the greatest smart ;  
 ' Found never help, who never would his hurts impart.'

' Oh, but,' quoth she, ' great grief will not be told,  
 ' And can more easily be thought than said.'  
 ' Right so,' quoth he, ' but he who never would,  
 ' Could never ; will to might gives greatest aid.'  
 ' But grief,' quoth she, ' doth greater grow displayed ;  
 ' If then it finds not help, it breeds despair.'  
 ' Despair breeds not,' quoth he, ' where faith is staid.'  
 ' Faith n'ere so fast,' quoth she, ' flesh does impair.'  
 ' Flesh may impair,' quoth he, ' but reason can repair.'

His goodly reason and well guided speech  
 So deep did settle in her gracious thought,  
 That it persuades her to disclose the breach  
 Which love and fortune in her heart had wrought.  
 She said, ' Fair sir, I hope good hap has brought  
 ' You to inquire the secrets of my grief ;  
 ' Or that your wisdom will direct my thought ;  
 ' Or that your prowess can me yield relief ;  
 ' Then hear the story sad, which I shall tell you brief.'

' The forlorn maiden, whom your eyes have seen,  
 ' The laughing-stock of fortune's mockeries,  
 ' Am th' only daughter of a king and queen ;  
 ' Whose parents dear, while equal destinies  
 ' Did run about, and their felicities  
 ' The favourable heavens did not envy,  
 ' Did spread their rule through all the territories  
 ' Which Phison and Euphrates floweth by,  
 ' And Gihon's golden waves do wash continually.'

' Till that their cruel cursed enemy,  
 ' A huge great dragon, horrible in sight,  
 ' Bred in the loathly lakes of Tartary,  
 ' With murderous rapine and devouring might,  
 ' Their kingdom spoiled, and country wasted quite.  
 ' Themselves, afraid into his jaws to fall,  
 ' Were forced to castle strong to take their flight ;  
 ' Where, fast embarred in mighty brazen wall,  
 ' He has them now four years besieged, to make them thrall.'



' Full many knights, adventurous and stout,  
 ' Have enterprised that monster to subdue ;  
 ' From every coast that heaven walks about,  
 ' Have thither come the noblest martial crew,  
 ' Who famous hard achievements still pursue ;  
 ' Yet never any could that garland win,  
 ' But all still shrunk ; and still he greater grew.  
 ' All they, for want of faith, or guilt of sin,  
 ' The piteous prey of his fierce cruelty have been.'

' At last, induced by far-reported praise,  
 ' Which flying fame throughout the world had spread,  
 ' Of doughty knights whom Fairy land did raise,  
 ' That noble order named of maidenhead,  
 ' Forthwith to court of GLORIANE I sped,  
 ' Of GLORIANE, great queen of glory bright,  
 ' Whose kingdom's seat CLEOPOLIS is read ;  
 ' There to obtain some such redoubted knight,  
 ' Who parents dear from tyrant's power deliver might.'

' It was my chance, a chance both fair and good,  
 ' Therein to find a fresh unproved knight,  
 ' Whose manly hands imbrued in guilty blood  
 ' Had never been ; nor ever by his might  
 ' Had thrown to ground the unregarded right ;  
 ' Yet of his prowess proof he since has made,  
 ' I witness am, in many cruel fight ;  
 ' The groaning ghosts of many one dismayed  
 ' Have felt the bitter dint of his avenging blade.'

' And ye, the forlorn reliques of his power,  
 ' His biting sword, and his devouring spear,  
 ' Which have endured many a dreadful stour, [concluet]  
 ' Can speak his prowess, who did erst you bear,  
 ' And well could wield ; now he hath left you here  
 ' To be the record of his rueful loss,  
 ' And of my doleful ill-adventurous dear :  
 ' O heavy record of the good REDCROSS,  
 ' Where have ye left your lord, who could so well you toss ?'

' Well hoped I, and fair beginnings had,  
 ' That he my captive parents should redeem ;  
 ' Till, unsuspecting, an enchanter bad  
 ' His sense abused, and made him to misdeem  
 ' My loyalty, not such as it did seem,  
 ' And rather death desire than such despite.  
 ' Be judge, ye heavens, that all things right esteem,  
 ' How I him loved, and loved with all my might !  
 ' So thought I too of him, and think I thought aright.'

' Thenceforth me desolate he quite forsook,  
 ' To wander where wild fortune would me lead ;  
 ' And other byeways he himself betook,  
 ' Where never foot of living man did tread,  
 ' Who brought not back his baleful body dead ;  
 ' Where he by chance did false DUESSA meet,  
 ' My only foe, my only deadly dread,  
 ' Who with her witchcraft and misseeming sweet,  
 ' Inveigled him to follow her desires unmeet.'  
 ' At last by subtle sleights she him betrayed  
 ' Unto his foe, a giant huge and tall,  
 ' Who him disarmed, dissolute, dismayed,  
 ' Unwares surprised, and with mighty mall,  
 ' The monster merciless him made to fall,  
 ' Whose fall did never foe before behold :  
 ' And now in darksome dungeon, wretched thrall !  
 ' Remediless, he ever doth him hold :  
 ' This is my cause of grief, more great than may be told !'

Before she ended she began to faint ;  
 But he her comforted and fair bespake,  
 ' Truly, fair madam, ye have cause of plaint,  
 ' That stoutest heart, I ween, would cause to quake :  
 ' But be of cheer, and comfort to you take ;  
 ' For till I have released your captive knight,  
 ' Assure yourself, I will not you forsake.'  
 His cheerful words revived her cheerless sprite ;  
 So forth they went, the dwarf them guiding ever right.

### CANTO VIII.

Fair virgin, to redeem her dear,  
 Brings Arthur to the fight ;  
 Who slays the giant, wounds the beast,  
 And strips Duessa quite.

Ah me, how many perils do enfold  
 The righteous man, to make him daily fall,  
 Were not that heavenly grace doth him uphold,  
 And steadfast Truth release him out of all !  
 Her love is firm, her care continual,  
 So oft as he, through his own foolish pride  
 Or weakness, is to sinful bands made thrall :  
 Else would this REDCROSS knight in bonds have died,  
 For whose deliverance she this prince doth thither guide.

They sadly travelled thus, until they came  
 Nigh to a castle builded strong and high ;  
 Then cried the dwarf, ' Lo yonder is the same,  
 ' In which my lord, my liege, doth luckless lie,  
 ' Thrall to that giant's hateful tyranny ;  
 ' Therefore, dear sir, your mighty power assay.'  
 The noble knight alighted by and by  
 From lofty steed, and bade the lady stay,  
 To see what end of fight should him befall that day.

So with his squire, who did admire his might,  
 He marched forth unto that castle wall ;  
 Whose gates he found fast shut, no living wight  
 To guard the same, or answer comers's call.  
 Then took that squire a horn of bugle small,  
 Which hung adown his side in twisted gold  
 And tassels gay ; wide wonders over all  
 Of that same horn's great virtues had been told,  
 Which had approved been in uses manifold.

No man had ever heard that thrilling sound,  
 But trembling fear did feel in every vein :  
 Three miles it might be easy heard around,  
 And echoes three answered itself again :  
 No false enchantment or deceitful train, [wile]  
 Might once abide the terror of that blast,  
 But presently was void and wholly vain :  
 No gate so strong, no lock so firm and fast,  
 But with that piercing noise flew open quite or brast. [burst]

The same before the giant's gate he blew,  
 And all the castle quaked from the ground,  
 And every door of free will open flew.  
 The giant self, dismayed with that sound,  
 Where he with his DUESSA dalliance found,  
 In haste came rushing forth from inner bower,  
 With staring count'nance stern, as one astound,  
 And staggering steps, to see what sudden stour [noise]  
 Had wrought that horror strange, and dared his dreaded power.

And after him the proud DUESSA came,  
 High mounted on her many-headed beast ;  
 And every head with fiery tongue did flame,  
 And every head was crowned on its crest,  
 And bloody mouthed with recent cruel feast.  
 Which when the knight beheld, his mighty shield,  
 Upon his manly arm, he soon addressd,  
 And at him fiercely flew, with courage filled ;  
 And eager greediness through every member thrilled.

Therewith the giant buckled him to fight,  
 Inflamed with scornful wrath and high disdain,  
 And lifting up his dreadful club on height,  
 All armed with ragged knobs and knotty grin,  
 Him thought at first encounter to have slain.  
 But wise and wary was that noble peer,  
 And, lightly leaping from the monstrous maim,  
 Did fair avoid the violence so near ;  
 It bootèd nought that he such thunderbolts should bear.

No shame he thought to shun such hideous might :  
 The idle stroke enforcing furious way,  
 Missing the mark of his misaiming sight,  
 Did fall to ground, and with its heavy sway  
 So deeply dinted in the heavy clay,  
 That three yards deep a furrow up did throw :  
 The sad earth, wounded with so sore assay,  
 Did groan full grievous underneath the blow ;  
 And, trembling with strange fear, did like an earthquake show.

As when almighty Jove, in wrathful mood,  
 To wreak the guilt of mortal sins is bent,  
 Hurls forth his thundering dart with deadly food,  
 Enroll'd in flames and smouldering detriment,  
 Through riven clouds and molten firmament ;  
 The fierce three-forked engine, making way,  
 Both lofty towers and highest trees hath rent,  
 And all that might his angry passage stay,  
 And, shooting in the earth, casts up a mount of clay.

His boisterous club so buried in the ground,  
 He could not rear it up again so light,  
 But that the knight him at advantage found ;  
 And while he strove his cumbrous club to quite [quit]  
 Out of the earth, with blade all burning bright,  
 He smote off his left arm, which like a block  
 Did fall to ground deprived of native might :  
 Large streams of blood out of the trunkless stock  
 Forth gushed, like streams of water fresh from riven rock.

Dismayed with the desperate deadly wound,  
 And much impatient of unwonted pain,  
 He loudly brayed with beastly yelling sound,  
 That all the fields rebellowed it again :  
 So great a noise as when, in Cymbrian plain,  
 A herd of bulls, whom kindly rage doth sting,  
 Do for the milky mothers loud complain,  
 And fill the fields with troublous bellowing,  
 And neighbour woods around with hollow murmuring.

Which when his dear DUESSA heard, and saw  
The evil stroke which endangered her estate,  
Unto his side she hastily did draw  
Her dreadful beast, which, swollen with blood of late,  
Came ramping forth with proud presumptuous gait,  
His heads all threatening like flaming brands:  
But him the squire made quickly to retreat,  
Encountering fierce with single sword in hand ;  
And twixt him and his lord did like a bulwark stand.

The proud DUESSA, full of wrathful spite  
And fierce disdain to be affronted so,  
Enforced her purple beast with all her might,  
That faithful sturdy squire to overthrow,  
Scorning the let of so unequal foe :  
But not the more would that courageous swain  
To him yield way, against his lord to go,  
But with outrageous strokes did him restrain,  
And with his body barr'd the pass betwixt them twain.

Then took the angry witch her golden cup,  
Which still she bore, replete with magic arts ;  
Death and despair did many thereof sup,  
And secret poison through their inner parts ;  
The eternal bale of heavy wounded hearts ;  
Which, after charms and some enchantments said,  
She lightly sprinkled on his weaker parts ;  
Therewith his stubborn courage soon was quaid, [subdued]  
And all his senses were with sudden dread dismayed.

So down he fell before the cruel beast,  
Whose bloody claws upon his neck did seize,  
And life nigh crushed out of his panting breast ;  
No power he had to stir, nor will to rise.  
Which when the careful knight did well advise,  
He lightly left the foe with whom he fought,  
And to the beast did turn his enterprise ;  
For wondrous anguish in his heart it wrought,  
To see his loved squire into such thralldom brought.

And, high advancing his blood-thirsty blade,  
Struck one of those deformed heads so sore,  
And of his power such proud example made,  
The monstrous scalp down to the teeth it tore,  
And that misformed shape misshaped more :  
A sea of blood gushed from the gaping wound,  
Which her gay garments stained with filthy gore,  
And overflowed all the field around ;  
That over shoes in blood he waded on the ground.

The beast now roared with exceeding pain,  
Which to have heard great horror would have bred ;  
He scourged the empty air with his long train,  
Through great impatience of his grieved head ;  
His gorgeous rider from her lofty stead  
Would have cast down, and trod in dirty mire,  
Had not the giant soon her succoured,  
Who, all enraged with smart and frantic ire,  
Came rushing on full fierce, and made the knight retire.

The force which wont in two to be dispers'd,  
In one hand left alone he now unites,  
Which is through rage more strong than both were erst ;  
With it his hideous club aloft he dites, [lifts]  
And at his foe with furious rigour smites,  
That strongest oak might seem to overthrow ;  
The stroke upon his shield so heavy lights,  
That to the ground it doubleth him full low.

• What mortal man could ever bear the monstrous blow !

And in his fall, the shield that covered was,  
Did lose its veil by chance and open flew ;  
The light whereof, that heaven's light did pass,  
Such blazing brightness through the air then threw,  
That eye could not the same endure to view.  
Which when the giant saw with staring eye,  
He down let fall his arm, and soft withdrew  
His weapon huge, that heaved was on high,  
For to have slain the man, that on the ground did lie.

And now the fruitful-headed beast, amazed  
At flashing beams of that sun-shiny shield,  
Became stark blind, and all his senses dazed, [confused]  
That down he tumbled on the dirty ground,  
And seemed himself, as conquered, to yield.  
Whom when his mistress proud perceived to fall,  
While yet his feeble feet for faintness reeled,  
Unto the giant loudly she did call,  
' O help, OGGOGIO, help, or else we perish all !'

At her so piteous cry, was much amoved  
Her champion stout ; and, for to aid his friend  
Again his wonted angry weapon proved,  
But all in vain : for he has read his end  
In that bright shield, and all his forces spend  
Themselves in vain : for, since that glancing sight,  
He hath no power to hurt, nor to defend ;  
As where the Almighty's light'ning brand doth light,  
It dims the dazzled eyes, and daunts the senses quite.

Whom, when the prince, to battle new addrest,  
 And threatening high his dreadful stroke, did see,  
 His sparkling blade about his head he blest, [brandished]  
 And smote off quite his left leg by the knee,  
 That down he tumbled : as an aged tree,  
 High groaning on the top of rocky clift,  
 Whose heart-strings with keen steel nigh severed be,  
 The mighty trunk, half rent with ragged rift,  
 Doth roll adown the rocks, and fall with fearful drift :

Or as a castle, reared high and round,  
 By subtle engines and malicious sleight,  
 Is undermined from the lowest ground,  
 And her foundations forced and feebled quite,  
 At last down falls ; and with her heaped height  
 Her hasty ruin does more heavy make,  
 And yield herself unto the victor's might :  
 Such was the giant's fall, which seemed to shake  
 The steadfast globe of earth, as it for fear did quake.

The knight then, lightly leaping to his prey,  
 With mortal steel him smote again so sore,  
 That headless his unwieldly body lay,  
 And wallowed in his own foul bloody gore,  
 Which flowed from his wounds in wondrous store ;  
 But soon as breath out of his breast did pass,  
 That huge great body which the giant bore,  
 Was vanished quite ; and of that monstrous mass  
 Was nothing left, but like an empty bladder was.

Whose grievous fall, when false DUESSA spied,  
 Her golden cup she cast unto the ground,  
 And crowned mitre rudely threw aside ;  
 Such piercing grief her stubborn heart did wound,  
 That she could not endure that doleful stound ; [event]  
 But leaving all behind her fled away :  
 The light-foot squire her quickly turned round,  
 And by hard means enforcing her to stay,  
 Did bring her to his lord, as his deserved prey.

The royal virgin, who beheld from far,  
 In pensive plight and sad perplexity,  
 The whole achievement of this doubtful war,  
 Came running fast to greet his victory,  
 With sober gladness and mild modesty ;  
 And with sweet joyous cheer him thus bespake,  
 ' Fair flower of nobleness and chivalry,  
 ' Whose worthy deeds the world amazed make,  
 ' What can requite the pains ye suffer for my sake ?'

' And you, fresh bud of virtue, springing fast,  
 ' Whom these sad eyes saw nigh unto Death's door,  
 ' What hath poor virgin, for such peril past,  
 ' Wherewith you to reward? Accept therefore  
 ' My simple self and service evermore.  
 ' And H<sup>is</sup> who high doth sit, and all things see  
 ' With equal eye, their merits to restore,  
 ' Behold what ye this day have done for me  
 ' And what I cannot pay, requite with usury !'  
 ' But since the heavens and your fair handling  
 ' Have made you master of the field this day,  
 ' Your fortune master now with governing,  
 ' And, well begun, end all as well, I pray,  
 ' Nor let that wicked woman scape away :  
 ' For she it is who did my lord enthrall,  
 ' My dearest lord, and deep in dungeon lay,  
 ' Where he his better days hath wasted all :  
 ' O hear how piteous he to you for aid does call ?'

Forthwith he gave in charge unto his squire,  
 That scarlet whore, to keep her carefully ;  
 While he himself, with greedy great desire,  
 Into the castle entered forcibly,  
 Where living creature none he did espy :  
 Then gan he loudly through the house to call ;  
 But no man cared to answer to his cry :  
 There reigned a solemn silence over all :  
 No voice was heard ; no one was seen in bower or hall.

At last, with creeping crooked pace, forth came  
 An old old man, with beard as white as snow :  
 Who on a staff his feeble steps did frame,  
 And guide his weary gait both to and fro ;  
 For his eye-sight him failed long ago :  
 And on his arm a bunch of keys he bore,  
 The which, unused, rust did overgrow :  
 These were the keys of every inner door ;  
 Yet he could not them use, but only kept in store.

A very uncouth sight 'twas to behold,  
 How he did fashion his untoward pace ;  
 For as he forward moved his footing old,  
 So backward still was turned his wrinkled face ;  
 Unlike to men, who ever as they trace,  
 Both feet and face one way are wont to lead.  
 This was the ancient keeper of that place,  
 And foster-father of the giant dead :  
 His name, IENARO, did his nature rightly read.



His reverend hairs and hoary gravity  
The knight much honoured, as beseemed well ;  
And gently ask'd where all the people be,  
Who in that stately building wont to dwell ;  
He answered full soft, *He could not tell.*  
Again he ask'd where that same knight was laid,  
Whom great ORGOGLIO, with his power fell,  
Had made his captive thrall : again he said,  
*He could not tell ;* nor ever other answer made.

Then asked he, which way he in might pass ;  
*He could not tell,* again he answered.  
Thereat the courteous knight displeased was,  
And said, ' Old sire, it seems thou hast not read  
' How ill it sits with that same silver head,  
' In vain to mock, or mocked in vain to be.  
' But if thou be, as well thou art pourtrayed  
' With Nature's pen, in age's grave degree,  
' Declare in graver wise what I demand of thee.'

His answer likewise was, *He could not tell :*  
Whose senseless speech and doting ignorance,  
When that the noble prince had marked well,  
He guess'd his nature by his countenance,  
And calmed his wrath with goodly temperance.  
Then to him stepping, from his arm did reach  
Those keys, and made himself free enterance.  
Each door he opened without any breach ;  
There was no bar to stop, nor foe him to impeach.

There all within full rich arrayed he found,  
With royal arms and with resplendent gold,  
And did with store of every thing abound,  
That greatest prince's presence might behold.  
But all the floor, too filthy to be told,  
With blood of guiltless babes and inn'cents true,  
Which there were slain, as sheep out of the fold,  
Defiled was ; that dreadful 'twas to view ;  
And sacred ashes over it were strewed anew.

And there, beside a marble stone, was built  
An altar, carved with cunning imagery,  
On which true Christians' blood was often spilt,  
And holy martyrs often doomed to die,  
With cruel malice and strong tyranny :  
Whose blessed sprites, from underneath the stone,  
To God for vengeance cried continually,  
And with great grief were often heard to groan :  
The hardest heart would bleed to hear their piteous moan.

Through every room he sought, and every bower ;  
 But nowhere could he find that woeful thrall  
 At last he came unto an iron door,  
 That fast was locked ; but key found none at all  
 Amongst that bunch, to open it withall ;  
 Yet in the same a little grate was pight, [put]  
 Through which he sent his voice, and loud did call,  
 With all his power, to learn if living wight  
 Were housed therewithin, whom he deliver might.

Therewith a hollow dreary murmuring voice  
 These piteous plaints and dolours did resound ;  
 ' Oh, who is that who brings me happy choice  
 ' Of death, that here lie dying every stound, [moment]  
 ' Yet live perforce in baleful darkness bound ?  
 ' For now three moons have changed thrice their hue,  
 ' And have been thrice hid underneath the ground,  
 ' Since I the heaven's cheerful face did view :  
 ' O welcome, thou, who dost of death bring tidings true !'

Which when that champion heard, with piercing point  
 Of pity dear, his heart was thrilled sore ;  
 And trembling horror ran through every joint,  
 For ruth of gentle knight so foul forlore : [forlorn]  
 Which shaking off, he rent that iron door,  
 With furious force and indignation fell,  
 Where, entering in, his foot could find no floor,  
 But all a deep descent, as dark as hell,  
 That breathed ever forth a filthy baneful smell.

But neither darkness foul, nor filthy bands,  
 Nor noisome smell, his purpose could withhold :  
 Entire affection hateth nicer hands :  
 But he, with constant zeal and courage bold,  
 After long pains and labours manifold,  
 Did find the means that prisoner up to rear ;  
 Whose feeble thighs, unable to uphold  
 His pined corse, him scarce to light could bear :  
 A rueful spectacle of death and ghastly drear. [misery]

His sad dull eyes, deep sunk in hollow pits,  
 Could not endure the unwonted sun to view ;  
 His bare thin cheeks, for want of better bits,  
 And empty sides deprived of their due,  
 Would make a stony heart his hap to rue ;  
 His rawbone arms, whose mighty brawned bowers [sinews]  
 Were wont steel plates to rive, and helmets hew,  
 Were clean consumed ; and all his vital powers  
 Decayed ; and all his flesh shrunk up like withered flowers.

Whom when his lady saw, to him she ran  
 With hasty joy ; to see him made her glad,  
 And sad to view his visage pale and wan,  
 Who erst in flowers of freshest youth was clad.  
 Then, when her well of tears she wasted had,  
 She said, ' Ah dearest lord, what evil star  
 ' On you hath frowned and poured its influence bad,  
 ' That of your proper self ye robbed are,  
 ' And this misseeming hue your manly looks doth mar ?'

' But welcome now, my lord, in weal or woe,  
 ' Whose presence I have lacked too long a day ;  
 ' And fie on fortune, my avowed foe,  
 ' Whose wrathful wrecks do now themselves allay,  
 ' And for these wrongs shall treble penance pay  
 ' Of treble good : good grows of evils brief.'  
 The cheerless man, whom sorrow did dismay,  
 Had no delight to treat of bypast grief ;  
 His long endured famine needed more relief.

' Fair lady,' then said that victorious knight,  
 ' The things that grievous were to do or bear,  
 ' Them to renew, I wot, breeds no delight :  
 ' Music breeds best delight in loathing ear :  
 ' The only good that grows of passed fear  
 ' Is to be wise, and ware of like again.  
 ' To-day's example hath this lesson dear  
 ' Deep written in my heart with iron pen,  
 ' That bliss may not abide in state of mortal men.'

' Henceforth, sir knight, take to you wonted strength,  
 ' And master these mishaps by patient might :  
 ' Lo, where your foe lies stretched in monstrous length ;  
 ' And lo, that wicked woman in your sight,  
 ' The root of all your care and wretched plight,  
 ' Now in your power, to let her live or die.'  
 ' To do her die,' quoth UNA, ' were despite,  
 ' And shame to avenge so weak an enemy ;  
 ' But spoil her of her scarlet robe, and let her fly.'

So as she bade, that witch they disarrayed,  
 And robb'd of royal robes and purple pall,  
 And ornaments that richly were displayed :  
 They spared not to strip her of them all.  
 Then when they had despoiled her tire and caul,  
 Such as she was their eyes might her behold ;  
 And her misshaped parts did them appal,  
 A loathly wrinkled hag, ill favoured, old,  
 Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be told.

Her crafty head was altogether bald,  
 And, what I almost hesitate to write,  
 Was overgrown with scurf and filthy scald ;  
 Her rotten gums now toothless could not bite ;  
 But her two feet most monstrous were in sight,  
 For one of them was like an eagle's claw,  
 With griping talons armed to greedy fight ;  
 The other like a bear's uneven paw ;  
 More ugly shape yet never living creature saw.

Which when the knights beheld, amazed they were,  
 And wondered at so foul deformed wight.  
 ' Such then,' said UNA, ' as she seemeth here,'  
 ' Such is the face of FALSEHOOD ; such the sight  
 ' Of false DUESSA, when her borrowed light  
 ' Is vanished, and her counterfeits are known.'  
 Thus when they had the witch disrobed quite,  
 And all her filthy features open shown,  
 They let her go at will, and wander ways unknown.

She, flying fast from heaven's hated face,  
 And from the world that her discovered wide,  
 Fled to the wasteful wilderness apace,  
 From living eyes her open shame to hide ;  
 And lurked in rocks and caves long unespied.  
 But that fair crew of knights, and UNA fair,  
 Did in that castle afterwards abide,  
 To rest themselves, and weary powers repair ;  
 Were store they found of all, that dainty was and rare.

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## CANTO IX.

His loves and lineage Arthur tells :  
 The knights knit friendly hands :  
 Sir Trevisan flies from Despair,  
 Whom Redcross knight withstands.

O goodly golden chain, wherewith yfere [together]  
 The virtues linked are in lovely wise ;  
 And noble minds of yore allied were,  
 In brave pursuit of chivalrous emprise,  
 That none another's safety did despise,  
 Nor aid deny to him, in need that stands ;  
 But friendly each did other's praise devise,  
 How to advance with favourable hands,  
 As this good prince redeemed the REDCROSS knight from bands.

Who, when their powers, impaired by labour long,  
 With due repast they had recruited well,  
 And that weak captive man had waxed strong,  
 Resolved no longer there in ease to dwell,  
 But forward fare, as their adventures fell :  
 But, ere they parted, UNA fair besought  
 That stranger knight his name and nation tell ;  
 Lest so great good as he for her had wrought,  
 Should die unknown, and buried be in thankless thought.

‘ Fair virgin,’ said the prince, ‘ you me require  
 ‘ A thing beyond the compass of my art :  
 ‘ From both the lineage and the certain sire,  
 ‘ From which I sprung, from me are hidden yet.  
 ‘ For all so soon as life did me admit  
 ‘ Into this world, and shewed heaven’s light,  
 ‘ From parent’s care I taken was unfit,  
 ‘ And straight delivered to a Fairy knight,  
 ‘ To be upbrought in gentle arts and martial might.’

‘ Unto old Timon I was brought to live ;  
 ‘ Old Timon, who in youthful years had been  
 ‘ In warlike feats th’ expertest man alive,  
 ‘ And is the wisest now on earth I ween :  
 ‘ His dwelling low is in a valley green,  
 ‘ Under the foot of Rauran mossy-hoar,  
 ‘ From whence the river Dee, as silver clean,  
 ‘ His tumbling billows rolls with gentle roar ;  
 ‘ There all my days he trained me up in virtuous lore.’

‘ Thither the great magician Merlin came,  
 ‘ As was his wont, oftimes to visit me ;  
 ‘ For he had charge my discipline to frame,  
 ‘ And tutor’s nurture all to oversee.  
 ‘ Him oft and oft I asked in privy,  
 ‘ Of whom and of what lineage I did spring,  
 ‘ Whose answers bade me still assured be  
 ‘ That I was son and heir unto a king,  
 ‘ As time in his just term the truth to light should bring.’

‘ Well worthy child,’ said then the lady meek,  
 ‘ And pupil fit for such a tutor’s hand !  
 ‘ But what adventure that ye now do seek,  
 ‘ Hath brought you hither into Fairy land ?  
 ‘ Declare, prince ARTHUR, crown of martial band.’  
 ‘ Full hard it is,’ quoth he, ‘ to read aright  
 ‘ The course of heavenly cause, or understand  
 ‘ The secret meaning of th’ Eternal Might,  
 ‘ Who rules men’s ways, and guides the thoughts of living wight.’

' For whether He, through fixed deep foresight,  
 ' Me hither sent for cause to me unguess'd ;  
 ' Or for that bleeding wound, which day and night  
 ' Long time hath rankled in my riven breast,  
 ' With forced fury, following His behest,  
 ' Me hither brought by ways yet never found,  
 ' You to have helped I hold myself yet blest.'  
 ' Ah, courteous knight,' quoth she, ' what secret wound  
 ' Can ever be to grieve the gentlest heart on ground ?'

' Dear dame,' quoth he, ' you sleeping sparks awake,  
 ' Which, troubled once, into huge flames will grow ;  
 ' Nor ever will their fervent fury slake,  
 ' Till living moisture into smoke do flow,  
 ' And wasted life do lie in ashes low.  
 ' Yet since my silence lesseneth not my fire,  
 ' For told, it flames, yet hidden, it does glow,  
 ' I will reveal what ye so much desire.  
 ' Ah, Love, lay down thy bow, the while I may respire.'

' It was in freshest flower of youthful years,  
 ' When courage first does creep in manly chest ;  
 ' Then first that coal of kindly heat appears  
 ' To kindle love in every living breast :  
 ' But me had warned old Timon's wise behest,  
 ' Those creeping flames by reason to subdue,  
 ' Before their rage grew to so great unrest,  
 ' As miserable lovers use to rue,  
 ' Who still wax old in woe, while woe still waxeth new.'

' That idle name of love, and lovers' life,  
 ' As loss of time and virtue's enemy,  
 ' I ever scorned ; and joyed to stir up strife  
 ' In midst of their mournful tragedy,  
 ' Was wont to laugh when them I heard to cry,  
 ' And blow the fire which them to ashes Brent ; [burnt]  
 ' Their god himself, grieved at my liberty,  
 ' Shot many a dart at me with fierce intent ;  
 ' But I them warded all, with wary government.'

' But all in vain : no fort can be so strong,  
 ' Nor fleshly breast can armed be so sound,  
 ' But will at last be won with battery long,  
 ' Or unawares at disadvantage found ;  
 ' Nothing is sure that grows on earthly ground.  
 ' And who most trusts in arm of fleshly might,  
 ' And boasts in beauty's chain not to be bound,  
 ' Doth soonest fall in disadvantageous fight,  
 ' And yields his caitiff neck to victor's most despise.'

' Example is in him, your hapless joy,  
 ' And in myself, now mated, as ye see ;  
 ' Whose prouder vaunt that proud avenging boy  
 ' Did soon pluck down, and curbed my liberty.  
 ' For on a day, pricked forth with jolity  
 ' Of looser life and heat of hardiment,  
 ' Ranging the forest wide on courser free,  
 ' The fields the floods the heavens, with one consent,  
 ' Did seem to laugh on me, and favour mine intent.'

' Much wearied with my sports, I did alight,  
 ' From lofty steed, and down to sleep me laid :  
 ' The verdant grass my couch did goodly dight, [prepare]  
 ' And pillow was my helmet fair displayed :  
 ' While every sense the humour sweet embayed,  
 ' And slumbers soft my heart did steal away,  
 ' Me seemed, by my side a royal maid  
 ' Her dainty limbs full softly down did lay ;  
 ' So fair a creature yet saw never sunny day.'

' Most goodly glee and lovely blandishment  
 ' She to me made, and bade me love her dear ;  
 ' For dearly sure her love was to me bent,  
 ' As, when just time expired, should appear.  
 ' But whether dreams delude, or true it were,  
 ' Was never heart so ravished with delight,  
 ' Nor living man like words did ever hear,  
 ' As she to me delivered all that night ;  
 ' And at her parting said she Queen of Fairies hight.' [was called]

' When I awoke and found her place devoid,  
 ' And nought but pressed grass where she had lain,  
 ' I sorrowed all as much as erst I joyed,  
 ' And washed all the place with watery eyen. [eyes]  
 ' From that day forth I loved that face divine ;  
 ' From that day forth I vowed in careful mind  
 ' To seek her out, with labour and long tyne ; [time]  
 ' And never will I rest till her I find :  
 ' Nine months I've sought in vain, nor will that vow unbind.'

Thus as he spoke, his visage waxed pale,  
 And change of hue great passion did betray ;  
 Yet still he strove to cloke his inward bale,  
 And hide the smoke that did the fire display ;  
 Till gentle UNA thus to him did say ;  
 ' O happy Queen of Fairies, who hast found,  
 ' Mongst many, one who by his prowess may  
 ' Defend thine honour, and thy foes confound !  
 ' True loves are often sown, but seldom grow on ground.'

'Thine, O then,' said the gentle Redcross knight,  
 'Next to that lady's love, shall be the place,  
 'O fairest virgin, full of heavenly light,  
 'Whose wondrous faith, exceeding earthly race,  
 'Was firmest fixt in mine extremest case.  
 'And you, my lord, the patron of my life,  
 'Of that great queen may well gain worthy grace ;  
 'For only worthy you, through prowess' prief, [proof]  
 'If living man may worthy be, to be her lief. [lover]

So diversely discoursing of their loves,  
 The golden sun his glistering head gan shew,  
 And sad remembrance now the prince amoves  
 With fresh desire his journey to pursue :  
 And UNA yearned her travail to renew.  
 Then these two knights, fast friendship for to bind,  
 And love establish each to other true,  
 Gave goodly gifts, the signs of grateful mind,  
 And then, as pledges firm, right hands together joined.

Prince ARTHUR gave a box of diamond sure,  
 Emboss'd with gold and gorgeous ornament,  
 Wherein were closed few drops of liquor pure,  
 Of wondrous worth, and virtue excellent,  
 That any wound could heal incontinent.  
 Which to requite, the Redcross knight him gave  
 A book, wherein his Saviour's Testament  
 Was writ, with golden letters rich and brave ;  
 A work of wondrous grace, and able souls to save.

This done, they parted ; ARTHUR on his way  
 To seek his love ; the other for to fight  
 With UNA's foe, who on her realm did prey.  
 But she, now weighing the decayed plight  
 And shrunken sinews of her chosen knight,  
 Would not awhile her forward course pursue,  
 Nor bring him forth in face of dreadful fight,  
 Till he recovered had his former hue ;  
 For him to be yet weak and weary well she knew.

So as they travelled, lo, they did espy  
 An armed knight toward them gallop fast,  
 Who seemed from some dreaded foe to fly,  
 Or other grisly thing, that him aghast. [terrified]  
 Still as he fled his eye was backward cast,  
 As if his foe still followed him behind :  
 And flew his steed, as he his hands had brast, [burst]  
 And with his winged heels did tread the wind,  
 As he had been a foal of Pegasus his kind.



Nigh as he drew, they did perceive his head  
 To be unarmed, and curled uncombed hairs  
 Upstaring stiff, dismayed with uncouth dread ;  
 Nor drop of blood in all his face appears,  
 Nor life in limb ; and to increase his fears,  
 In foul reproach of knighthood's fair degree,  
 About his neck a hempen rope he wears,  
 That with his glistening arms does ill agree :  
 But he of rope or arms has now no memory.

The Redcross knight to him advanced fast,  
 To see what sort of wight was so dismayed :  
 There him he finds all senseless and aghast,  
 That of himself he seemed to be afraid ;  
 Whom he from flying forward hardly stayed,  
 Till he these words to him deliver might ;  
 ' Sir knight, tell me who hath you thus arrayed,  
 ' And tell from whom you make this hasty flight ?  
 ' For never knight I saw in such misseeming plight.'

He answered nought at all ; but adding new  
 Fear to his first amazement, staring wide  
 With stony eyes and heartless hollow hue,  
 Astonished stood, as one who had espied  
 Infernal furies with their chains untied.  
 Him yet again, and yet again, bespake  
 The gentle knight ; who nought to him replied,  
 But, trembling every joint, did inly quake ;  
 His faltering tongue at last these words seemed forth to shake ;

' For God's dear love, sir knight, do not me stay ;  
 ' For lo ! he comes, he comes fast after me !'  
 Then, looking back, would fain have run away.  
 But he him forced to stay, and tell forth free  
 The secret cause of his perplexity.  
 Yet not the more by his bold hearty speech  
 Could his blood-frozen heart emboldened be,  
 But through his boldness rather fear did reach :  
 Yet, forced, at last he made through silence sudden breach.

' And am I now in safety sure,' quoth he,  
 ' From him who would have forced me to die ?  
 ' And is the point of death now turned from me,  
 ' That I may tell this hapless history ?'  
 ' Fear nought,' quoth he, ' no danger now is nigh.'  
 ' Then shall I you recount a rueful case,'  
 Said he, ' the which with this unlucky eye  
 ' I late beheld ; and, had not greater grace  
 ' Me reft from it, had been partaker of the place.'

' I lately chanced—would I had never chanced !  
 ' With a fair knight to keep in company,  
 ' Sir Terwin, called, who well himself advanced  
 ' In all affairs, and was both bold and free,  
 ' But not so happy as might happy be.  
 ' He loved, as was his lot, a lady gent, [accomplished]  
 ' Who in return loved him in least degree ;  
 ' For she was proud, and of too high intent,  
 And joyed to see her lover languish and lament :

' From whom returning sad and comfortless,  
 ' As on the way together we did fare,  
 ' We met that villain, God from him me bless !  
 ' That cursed wight from whom I 'scaped whilere, [just now]  
 ' A man of hell, who calls himself DESPAIR ;  
 ' He first us greets, and after fair proceeds  
 ' To tell of tidings and adventures rare ;  
 ' So creeping close, as snake in hidden weeds,  
 ' Inquireth of our states, and of our knightly deeds.'

' Which when he knew, and found our feeble hearts  
 ' O'erwhelmed with sorrow and with biting grief,  
 ' Which love had pierced with his deadly darts,  
 ' With wounding words and terms of foul reproof, [reproof]  
 ' He pluck'd from us all hope of due relief,  
 ' That erst held us in love of lingering life ;  
 ' Then hopeless, heartless, did the cunning thief  
 ' Urge us to die, to stint all further strife ;  
 ' To me he lent this rope, to him a rusty knife ;'

' With which sad instrument of hasty death,  
 ' That woeful lover, loathing longer light,  
 ' A wide way made to let forth living breath.  
 ' But I, more fearful or more lucky wight,  
 ' With terror smitten by that dismal sight,  
 ' Fled fast away, half dead with dying fear ;  
 ' Nor yet assured of life by you, sir knight,  
 ' Whose like infirmity like chance may bear ;  
 ' But God you never let his charmed speeches hear !'

' How may a man,' said he, ' with idle speech,  
 ' Be won, to spoil the castle of his health ?'  
 ' I know,' quoth he, ' whom trial late did teach ;  
 ' The like I would not learn for worldly wealth.  
 ' His subtle tongue, like dropping honey, melt'h [melteth]  
 ' Into the heart, and searcheth every vein ;  
 ' That, ere one is aware, by secret stealth,  
 ' All power is reft, and weakness doth remain.  
 ' O never, sir, desire to try his guileful train !'

'Henceforth,' said he, 'I sure shall never rest,  
 'Till I that traitor's art have heard and tried :  
 'And you, sir knight, whose name may I request,  
 'Of grace do me unto his cabin guide.  
 'I, who am called Trevisan,' quoth he, 'will ride,  
 'Against my liking, back to do you grace :  
 'But not for gold or glee will I abide  
 'By you, when you arrive in that same place :  
 'For rather would I die than see his deadly face.'

Ere long they come where that same wicked wight  
 His dwelling has, low in a hollow cave,  
 Far underneath a craggy cliff ylight, [placed]  
 Dark, doleful, dreary, like a greedy grave,  
 That still for carrion carcasses doth crave ;  
 Upon the top there dwelt the ghastly owl,  
 Shrieking his baleful note, which ever drave  
 Far from that haunt all other cheerful fowl ;  
 And all about it wandering ghosts did wail and howl :

And all about old stocks and stumps of trees,  
 Whereon nor fruit nor leaf was ever seen,  
 Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees ; [projections]  
 On which had many wretches hanged been,  
 Whose carcasses were scattered on the green,  
 And thrown about the cliffs. Arrived there,  
 That bare-head knight, for dread of doleful teen, [injury]  
 Would fain have fled, nor durst approach too near :  
 The other forced him stay, and comforted his fear.

That darksome cave they enter, where they find  
 That cursed man, low sitting on the ground,  
 Musing full sadly in his sullen mind ;  
 His grizzly locks, grown long and all unbound,  
 Disordered hung about his shoulders round,  
 And hid his face ; through which his hollow eyne [eyes]  
 Looked deadly dull, and stared as astound ;  
 His raw-bone cheeks, through penury and pine,  
 Were shrunk into his jaws, as he did never dine.

His garment, nought but many ragged clouts,  
 With thorns together pinned and patched was,  
 The which his naked sides he wrapped abouts ;  
 And on the spot there lay upon the grass,  
 A dreary corse whose life away did pass,  
 Wallowing in his own yet lukewarm blood,  
 That from his wound yet welled fresh, alas !  
 In which a rusty knife fast fixed stood,  
 And made an open passage for the gushing flood.

- Which piteous spectacle, approving true  
 The woeful tale that Trevisan had told,  
 When that the gentle REDCROSS knight did view,  
 With fiery zeal he burnt in courage bold  
 Him to avenge, before his blood were cold ;  
 And to the villain said, ' Thou cursed wight,  
 ' The author of this fact we here behold,  
 ' What justice can but judge against thee right,  
 ' With thine own blood to pay his blood, here shed in sight ?'
- ' What frantic fit,' quoth he, ' hath thus distraught  
 ' Thee, foolish man, so rash a doom to give ?  
 ' What justice ever other judgment taught,  
 ' But he should die, who merits not to live ?  
 ' None did to death this man despairing drive,  
 ' But his own guilty mind, deserving death.  
 ' Is it unjust to each his due to give ?  
 ' Or let him die, that loatheth living breath ?  
 ' Or let him die at ease, who liveth here unneath ?' [with difficulty]
- ' Who travels by the weary wandering way,  
 ' To come unto his wished home in haste,  
 ' And meets a flood that doth his passage stay,  
 ' Is it not grace to help him over past ?  
 ' Or free his feet that in the mire stick fast ?  
 ' Most envious man, that griev'st at neighbour's good ;  
 ' And fond, that joyest in the woe thou hast :  
 ' Why wilt not let him pass, who long hath stood  
 ' Upon the bank, yet wilt thyself not pass the flood ?'
- ' He there does now enjoy eternal rest  
 ' And happy ease, which thou dost want and crave,  
 ' And further from it daily wanderest :  
 ' What if some little pain the passage have,  
 ' That makes frail flesh to fear the bitter wave,  
 ' Is not short pain well borne that brings long ease,  
 ' And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave ?  
 ' Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas,  
 ' Ease after war, death after life, does greatly please.'
- The knight much wondered at his sudden wit,  
 And said, ' The term of life is limited,  
 ' Nor may a man prolong or shorten it ;  
 ' The soldier may not move from watchful stead,  
 ' Nor leave his stand until his captain bed.' [bid] .  
 ' Who life did limit by Almighty doom,'  
 Quoth he, ' knows best the terms established ;  
 ' And who appoints the sentinel his room,  
 ' Doth license to depart, at sound of morning drum.'

' Is't not His deed, whatever thing is done,  
 ' In heaven and earth ? Did not He all create  
 ' To die again ? All ends that was begun.  
 ' Their times in his eternal book of fate,  
 ' Are written sure, and have their certain date.  
 ' Who then can strive with strong necessity,  
 ' That holds the world in its still changing state ?  
 ' Or shun the death ordained by destiny ?  
 ' When hour of death is come, let none ask whence or why.'

' The longer life, I deem, the greater sin ;  
 ' The greater sin, the greater punishment.  
 ' All those great battles, which thou boast'st to win,  
 ' Through strife and bloodshed and avengement,  
 ' Now praised, hereafter dear thou shalt repent ;  
 ' For life must life, and blood must blood, repay.  
 ' Is not enough thy evil life forespent ?  
 ' For he who once hath missed the right way,  
 ' The further he doth go, the further he doth stray.'

' Then do no further go, no further stray ;  
 ' But here lie down, and to thy rest betake,  
 ' Ill to prevent, which happen after may ;  
 ' For what hath life, that may it loved make,  
 ' And gives not rather cause it to forsake ?  
 ' Fear, sickness, age, loss, labour, sorrow, strife,  
 ' Pain, hunger, cold that makes the heart to quake,  
 ' And ever fickle fortune, rageth rife ;  
 ' All which, and thousands more, compose a loathsome life.'

' Thou, wretched man, of death hast greatest need,  
 ' If in true balance thou wilt weigh thy state ;  
 ' For never knight that dared warlike deed,  
 ' More luckless adventures did amate : [subdue]  
 ' Witness the dungeon deep, wherein of late  
 ' Thy life, shut up, for death so oft did call ;  
 ' And though good luck prolonged hath thy date,  
 ' Yet death then would the like mishap forestall,  
 ' Into the which hereafter thou mayest happen fall.'

' Why then dost thou, O man of sin, desire  
 ' To draw thy days forth to the last degree ?  
 ' Is not the measure of thy sinful hire  
 ' High heaped up with huge iniquity,  
 ' Against the day of wrath to burden thee ?  
 ' Is't not enough, that thou to lady mild  
 ' Hast falsified thy faith with perjury,  
 ' And sold thyself to serve DUESSA vild, [vile]  
 ' With whom, in all abuse, thou hast thyself defiled.'

- ' Is not He just, who all this doth behold
- ' From highest heaven, and bears an equal eye ?
- ' Shall He thy sins up in his knowledge fold,
- ' And guilty be of thine impiety ?
- ' Is not His law, Let every sinner die ?
- ' Die shall all flesh : what then must needs be done,
- ' Is it not better to do willingly,
- ' Than linger till the glass be all out run ?
- ' Death is the end of woes : die soon, O woman's son.'

The knight was much enmoved with this speech,  
Which as a sword's point through his heart did pierce,  
And in his conscience made a secret breach,  
Well knowing true all that he did rehearse,  
And to his fresh remembrance did reverse [bring back]  
The ugly view of all his former crimes ;  
That all his manly powers it did disperse,  
As he were charmed with enchanted rhymes ;  
And oftentimes he quaked, and fainted oftentimes.

In which amazement when the miscreant  
Perceived him to waver weak and frail,  
While trembling horror did his conscience daunt,  
And hellish anguish did his soul assail ;  
To drive him to despair, and quite to quail,  
He shewed him, painted in a table plain,  
The damned ghosts that do in torment<sup>s</sup> wail,  
And thousand fiends, that do them endless pain  
With fire and brimstone, which for ever shall remain.

The sight whereof so thoroughly him dismayed,  
That nought but death before his eyes he saw ;  
And ever burning wrath before him laid,  
By righteous sentence of the Almighty's law.  
Then gan the villain him to overcraw,  
And brought unto him swords, ropes, poison, fire,  
And all that might him to perdition draw ;  
And bade him choose what death he would desire,  
For death was due to him, who had provoked God's ire.

But, when that none of them he saw him take,  
He to him reached a dagger sharp and keen,  
And gave it him in hand : his hand did quake  
And tremble like a leaf of aspen green,  
And troubled blood through his pale face was seen  
To come and go, with tidings from the heart,  
As it a running messenger had been.  
At last, resolved to work his final smart,  
He lifted up his hand, but back again did start.

The which when UNA saw, through every vein  
 The curdling cold ran to her well of life,  
 As in a swoon : but, soon relieved again,  
 Out of his hand she snatched the cursed knife,  
 And threw it to the ground, enraged rife,  
 And to him said, ' Fie, fie, faint-hearted knight,  
 ' What meanest thou by this reproachful strife ?  
 ' Is this the battle, which thou vaunt'st to fight  
 ' With that fire-mouthed dragon, horrible and bright ?'

' Come, come away, frail feeble fleshly wight,  
 ' Nor let vain words bewitch thy manly heart,  
 ' Nor devilish thoughts dismay thy constant sprite :  
 ' In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part ?  
 ' Why should'st thou then despair, that chosen art ?  
 ' Where justice grows, there grows the greater grace,  
 ' The which doth quench the brand of hellish smart,  
 ' And that accursed hand-writing doth deface :  
 ' Arise, sir knight ; arise, and leave this cursed place.'

So up he rose, and thence amounted straight :  
 Which when the carle beheld, and saw his guest  
 Would safe depart, for all his subtile sleight ;  
 He chose a halter from among the rest,  
 And with it hung himself, unbid, unblest.  
 But death he could not work himself thereby,  
 For thousand times he so himself had drest :  
 Nevertheless it could not do him die  
 Till he should die his last, that is, eternally.

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## CANTO X.

Her faithful knight fair Una brings  
 To house of Holiness :  
 Where he is taught repentance, and  
 The way to heavenly bliss.

What man is he, who boasts of fleshly might  
 And vain assurance of mortality,  
 Who, all so soon as he doth come to fight  
 Against his hellish foes, yields by and by,  
 Or from the field most cowardly does fly ?  
 Nor let the man ascribe it to his skill,  
 Who by God's grace hath gained the victory :  
 If any strength we have, it is to ill ;  
 But all the good is God's, both power and also will.

By that which lately happen'd, UNA saw  
 That this her knight was feeble and too faint ;  
 And that his sinews, waxen weak and raw,  
 Through long imprisonment and hard constraint,  
 Which he endured in his late restraint,  
 Unfited him as yet for bloody fight.  
 Therefore to cherish him with diets daint,  
 She thought to bring him where he nourished might,  
 Till he recovered had his late decayed plight.

There was an ancient house not far away,  
 Renowned throughout the world for sacred lore  
 And pure unspotted life ; so well, they say,  
 It governed was and guided evermore,  
 By wisdom of a matron grave and hoar ;  
 Whose only joy was to relieve the needs  
 Of wretched souls, and help the helpless poor ;  
 All night she spent in telling off her beads,  
 And all the day in doing good and godly deeds.

Dame CÆLIA she was called : and it was thought  
 From heaven she came, and thither would arise :  
 The mother of three daughters, well upbrought  
 In goodly arts, and godly exercise ;  
 The eldest two, most sober chaste and wise,  
 FIDELIA and SPERANZA, virgins were ;  
 Though spoused, yet wanting wedlock's-solemn ties ;  
 But fair CHARISSA to a loving peer  
 Was linked, whose bond was crowned with many pledges dear.

Arrived there, the door they find fast locked ;  
 For it was guarded well both night and day,  
 For fear of many foes ; but when they knocked,  
 The porter opened unto them straight way ;  
 He was an aged sire, all hoary gray,  
 With looks full lowly cast, and gait full slow,  
 Wont on a staff his feeble steps to stay,  
 Called HUMILITY. They enter, stooping low ;  
 For straight and narrow was the way that he did show.

Each goodly thing is hardest to begin ;  
 But, entered in, a spacious court they see,  
 Both plain and pleasant to be walked in ;  
 Where them does meet a franklin fair and free,  
 And entertains with comely courteous glee ;  
 His name was ZEAL, which him right well became ;  
 For in his speeches and behaviour he  
 Did labour lively to express the same,  
 And gladly did them guide, till to the hall they came.



There fairly them receives a gentle squire,  
 Of mild demeanour and rare courtesy ;  
 Right cleanly clad in comely grave attire ;  
 In word and deed who shewed great modesty,  
 And gave his due to all of each degree ;  
 Called REVERENCE : he them with speeches meet  
 Does fair entreat ; no courting nicety,  
 But simple, true, and also ever sweet,  
 As might become a squire, such persons high to greet.

And after this, them to his dame he leads,  
 That aged dame, the lady of the place,  
 Who all this time was busy at her beads ;  
 Which done, she up arose with seemly grace,  
 And toward them full matronly did pace.  
 Where, when that fairest UNA she beheld,  
 Whom well she knew to spring from heavenly race,  
 Her heart with joy unwonted inly swelled,  
 As feeling wondrous comfort in her weaker eld ; [age]

And her embracing, said, ' O happy earth,  
 ' Whereon thy innocent feet do ever tread !  
 ' Most virtuous virgin, born of heavenly birth,  
 ' Who, to redeem thy woeful parents' head  
 ' From tyrant's rage, and ever-dying dread,  
 ' Hast wandered through the world now long a day,  
 ' Yet ceasest not thy weary limbs to lead ;  
 ' What grace hath thee now hither brought this way ?  
 ' Or do thy feeble feet unweeting hither stray ?

' Strange thing it is an errant knight to see  
 ' Here in this place, or any other wight,  
 ' That hither turns his steps ; so few there be  
 ' That choose the narrow path, or seek the right.  
 ' All keep the broad high way, and take delight  
 ' With heedless multitudes to go astray,  
 ' And be partakers of their evil plight,  
 ' Rather than with a few to walk this way.  
 ' O foolish men ! why haste ye to your own decay ?'

' Thyself to see, and tired limbs to rest,  
 ' O matron sage,' quoth she, ' I hither came ;  
 ' And this good knight his way with me address'd,  
 ' Led with thy praises, and broad-blazed fame,  
 ' That up to heaven is blown.' The ancient dame  
 Him goodly greeted in her modest guise,  
 And entertained them both, as best became,  
 With all the courtesies she could devise,  
 Nor wanted aught to shew her bounteous and wise.

Thus as they did of sundry things devise,  
 Lo, two most goodly virgins came in place ;  
 Linked arm in arm they were in loving wise ;  
 With countenance demure and modest grace,  
 They numbered even steps and even pace ;  
 Of whom the eldest, who FIDELIA hight, [was called]  
 Like sunny beams threw from her crystal face,  
 That dazzled would the rash beholder's sight,  
 And round about her head did shine like heaven's light.

She was arrayed all in lilly white,  
 And in her right hand bore a cup of gold,  
 With wine and water filled up to the height,  
 In which a serpent did himself enfold,  
 Which terror caused to all that did behold ;  
 Yet she no whit did change her constant mood ;  
 But in her other hand she fast did hold  
 A book, that was both signed and sealed with blood ;  
 Wherein dark things were writ, hard to be understood.

Her younger sister, who SPERANZA hight, [was called]  
 Was clad in blue, which her beseemed well ;  
 Not all so cheerful seemed she to sight  
 As did her sister ; whether dread did dwell,  
 Or anguish, in her heart, is hard to tell :  
 Her arm upon a silver anchor lay,  
 Whereon she leaned ever, as befell ;  
 And ever up to heaven, as she did pray,  
 Her steadfast eyes were bent, nor swerved other way.

They, seeing UNA, towards her did wend,  
 Who them encounters with like courtesy ;  
 Many kind speeches they between them spend,  
 And greatly joy each other thus to see :  
 Then to the knight, with shame-faced modesty,  
 They turn themselves, at UNA's meek request,  
 And him salute with well beseeming glee ;  
 Who does them greet, as him beseemeth best,  
 And then discourse began of many a noble gest. [act]

Then UNA thus, ' But she, your sister dear,  
 ' The dear CHARISSA, where is she become ?  
 ' Or wants she health, or busy is elsewhere ?'  
 ' Ah no,' said they, ' but forth she may not come,  
 ' For she is late delivered of a son,  
 ' And hath increased the world with one child more,  
 ' That her to see would be but troublesome.'  
 ' Indeed,' quoth she, ' that would her trouble sore :  
 ' But God be thanked, and her increase so evermore !'

Then said the aged CÆLIA, ' Dear dame,  
' And you, good sir, I wot that of your toil  
' And labours long, through which ye hither came,  
' Ye both much wearied be : therefore awhile  
' I recommend you unto rest resile.'

Then called she a groom, who forth him led  
Into a goodly lodge, and did despoil  
Him of his arms, and laid in easy bed :  
His name was meek OBEDIENCE, rightfully read.

Now when their weary limbs, with kindly rest,  
And bodies, were refreshed, with due repast,  
Fair UNA did FIDELIA fair request  
To have the knight into her school-house placed,  
That of her heavenly learning he might taste,  
And hear the wisdom of her words divine.  
She granted ; and that knight so greatly graced,  
That she him taught celestial discipline,  
And opened his dull eyes, that light might in them shine.

And her blest book, which had with blood been writ,  
Which none could read except she did them teach,  
She unto him disclosed every whit,  
And heavenly doctrines thereout did preach,  
Which weaker wit of man could never reach ;  
Of God, of grace, of justice, of free-will ;  
That wonder was to hear her goodly speech :  
For she was able with her words to kill,  
And raise again to life the heart that she did thrill.

And when she would pour out her larger sprite,  
She did command the hasty sun to stay,  
Or backward turn his course from heaven's height ;  
Sometimes great hosts of men she would dismay ;  
Dry shod to pass, she parts the floods in tway ; [two]  
And the huge mountains from their native seat  
She would command themselves to bear away,  
And throw in raging sea with roaring threat :  
Almighty God to her did give such power great.

The faithful knight now grew in little space,  
By hearing her, and by her sister's lore,  
To such perfection of all heavenly grace,  
That all the wretched world he did abhor,  
And mortal life did loathe as thing forlore ; [forlorn]  
Grieved with remembrance of his wicked ways,  
And pricked with anguish of his sins so sore,  
That he desired to end his wretched days.  
So much the dart of sinful guilt the soul dismays !

But wise SPERANZA gave him comfort sweet,  
 And taught him how to take assured hold  
 Upon her silver anchor, as was meet :  
 Else had his sins, so great and manifold,  
 Made him forget all that FIDELIA told.  
 In this distressed doubtful agony,  
 When him his dearest UNA did behold,  
 Disdaining life, desiring leave to die,  
 She found herself assailed with great perplexity ;

And came to CÆLIA to declare her smart ;  
 Who well acquainted with that common plight,  
 Which sinful horror works in wounded heart,  
 Her comforted as wisely as she might,  
 With goodly counsel and advisement right ;  
 And straightway sent with careful diligence,  
 For a physician who had great insight  
 In that disease of grieved conscience,  
 And well could cure the same: his name was PATIENCE :

Who, coming to that soul-diseased knight,  
 Could hardly him entreat to tell his grief ;  
 Which known, and all that 'noyed his heavy sprite  
 Well searched, he soon began t' apply relief  
 Of salves and med'cines which had passing prief ; [proof]  
 And thereto added words of wondrous might ;  
 By which to ease he him restored brief,  
 And much assuaged the passion of his plight,  
 That he his pain endured, as seeming now more light.

But yet the cause and root of all his ill,  
 Inward corruption and infected sin,  
 Not purged nor healed, behind remained still,  
 And festering sore did rankle yet within,  
 Close creeping twixt the marrow and the skin :  
 Which to destroy, he laid him privily  
 Down in a darksome place far in,  
 Wherein he meant corrosives to apply,  
 And with strict diet tame his stubborn malady.

In ashes and sackcloth he did array  
 His dainty corse, proud humours to abate ;  
 And dieted with fasting every day,  
 The swelling of his wounds to mitigate ;  
 And made him early pray and also late :  
 And ever as superfluous flesh did rot,  
 AMENDMENT ready still at hand did wait,  
 To pluck it out with pincers fiery hot,  
 That soon in him was left not one corrupted jot.

And bitter PENANCE, with an iron whip,  
Him did chastise with rigour every day ;  
And sharp REMORSE his heart did prick and nip,  
That drops of blood thence like a well did play ;  
And sad REPENTANCE used to embay  
His body in salt water, smarting sore,  
The filthy blots of sin to wash away.  
So in short space they did to health restore  
The man who would not live, but erst lay at death's door.

In which his torment often was so great,  
That like a lion he would cry and roar,  
And rend his flesh, and his own sinews eat.  
His own dear UNA, hearing evermore  
His rueful shrieks and groanings, often tore  
Her guiltless garments and her golden hair,  
For pity of his pain and anguish sore ;  
Yet all with patience wisely she did bear :  
For well she wist his crime could else be never clear.

Him thus recovered by wise PATIENCE  
And true REPENTANCE, they to UNA brought ;  
Who, joyous of his cured conscience,  
Him dearly kissed, and tenderly besought  
Himself to cherish, and consuming thought  
To put away out of his careful breast.  
By this CHARISSA, late in child-bed brought,  
Was waxen strong, and left her fruitful nest :  
To her fair UNA brought this unacquainted guest.

She was a woman in her freshest age,  
Of wondrous beauty and of bounty rare,  
With goodly grace and comely personage,  
That was on earth not easy to compare ;  
Full of great love ; but Cupid's wanton snare  
As hell she hated ; chaste in work and will ;  
Her neck and breasts were ever open bare,  
That evermore her babes might suck their fill ;  
The rest was all in yellow robes arrayed still.

A multitude of babes about her hung,  
Playing their sports, which joyed her to behold ;  
Whom still she fed, while they were weak and young,  
But thrust them forth still as they waxed old :  
And on her head she wore a tire of gold,  
Adorned with gems and jewels wondrous fair,  
Whose passing price was never to be told ;  
And by her side there sat a gentle pair  
Of turtle doves, she sitting in her ivory chair.

The knight and UNA, entering, fair her greet,  
 And bid her joy of that her happy brood ;  
 Who them requites with court'sies seeming meet,  
 And entertains in friendly cheerful mood.  
 Then UNA her besought to be so good  
 As in her virtuous rules to school her knight,  
 Now after all his torment well withstood,  
 In that sad house of PENANCE, where his sprite  
 Had passed the pains of hell and long-enduring night.

She was right joyous of her just request ;  
 And, taking by the hand that fairy's son,  
 Did him instruct in every good behest,  
 Of love ; and righteousness ; and well to done ; [well-doing]  
 And wrath and hatred warily to shun,  
 That draw on men God's hatred and his wrath,  
 And many souls in dolours had fordone :  
 In which when him she well instructed hath,  
 From thence to heaven she teacheth him the ready path.

Wherein his weaker wandering steps to guide,  
 An ancient matron she to her does call,  
 Whose sober looks her wisdom well descried ;  
 Her name was MERCY, well known over all  
 To be both gracious and full liberal :  
 To her the careful charge of him she gave,  
 To lead aright, that he should never fall  
 In all his ways, through this world's changeful wave ;  
 That MERCY in the end his righteous soul might save.

The godly matron by the hand him bears  
 Forth from her presence, by a narrow way,  
 Scattered with bushy thorns and ragged brears, [briers]  
 Which still before him she removed away,  
 That nothing might his ready passage stay ;  
 And ever when his feet encumbered were,  
 Or gan to shrink, or from the right to stray,  
 She held him fast, and firmly did upbear ;  
 As careful nurse her child from falling oft does rear.

Forthwith unto a holy hospital,  
 That stood close by the way, she did him bring ;  
 In which seven bead-men, who had vowed all  
 Their life to service of high heaven's King,  
 Did spend their days in doing godly thing ;  
 The gates to all were open evermore,  
 Who by the weary way were travelling ;  
 And one sat waiting ever them before,  
 To call in passers-by, who needy were and poor.

The first of them, that eldest was and best,  
Of all the house had charge and government,  
As guardian and steward of the rest ;  
His office was to give entertainment  
And lodging unto all who came and went ;  
Not unto such as could him feast again,  
And double quit for that he on them spent ;  
But such as want of harbour did constrain :  
These for God's sake his duty was to entertain.

The second was almoner of the place :  
His office was the hungry for to feed,  
And thirsty give to drink, a work of grace ;  
He feared not once himself to be in need,  
Nor cared to hoard for those that he did breed ;  
The grace of God he laid up still in store,  
Which as a stock he left unto his seed :  
He had enough, what need he care for more ?  
And had he less, yet some he would give to the poor.

The third had of their wardrobe custody,  
In which were not rich tires, nor garments gay,  
The plumes of pride, and wings of vanity,  
But clothes made meet to keep keen cold away,  
And naked nature seemly to array ;  
With which bare wretched folks he daily clad,  
The images of God in earthly clay ;  
And if that no spare clothes to give he had,  
His own coat he would cut, and it distribute glad.

The fourth appointed by his office was  
Poor prisoners to relieve with gracious aid,  
And captives to redeem, with price of brass,  
From Turks and Saracens, who them had stayed ;  
And, though they faulty were, yet well he weighed,  
That God to us forgiveth every hour  
Much more than that why they in bonds were laid ;  
And he who did the devil overpower,  
Snatched faulty souls from death unto his heavenly bower.

The fifth had charge sick persons to attend,  
And comfort those at point of death who lay ;  
For they most need such comfort in the end,  
When sin and death and hell do most dismay  
The feeble souls departing hence away.  
All is but lost that living we bestow,  
If not well ended in our dying day.  
O man ! have mind of that most bitter throw ;  
For as the tree does fall, so lies it ever low.

The sixth had charge of such as new were dead,  
 To place their corpses in a seemly grave,  
 And deck with dainty flowers their bridal bed,  
 That to their heavenly spouse both sweet and brave  
 They might appear, whose grace their souls doth save.  
 The wondrous workmanship of God's own mould,  
 Whose face he made all beasts to fear, and gave  
 Into his hand, even dead we honour should.  
 Ah, dearest God, me grant I dead be not defoul'd !

The seventh, now death and burial done,  
 Had charge to aid the orphans of the dead  
 And widows lone, lest they should be undone :  
 In face of judgment he their right would plead,  
 Nor aught the power of mighty men did dread  
 In their defence ; nor would for gold or fee  
 Be won, their rightful causes down to tread :  
 And when they stood in most necessity,  
 He did supply their want with bounty ever free.

There when the REDCROSS knight arrived was,  
 The first and chieftest of the seven, whose care  
 Was guests to welcome, towards him did pass ;  
 Where seeing MERCY, who his steps upbare  
 And always led, to her with reverence rare  
 He meekly bowed in humble lowliness,  
 And seemly welcome for her did prepare ;  
 For of their order she was patroness,  
 Although CHARISSA was their chieftest foundress.

There she awhile him stays, himself to rest,  
 That afterwards more able he might be :  
 During which time, in every good behest,  
 And godly work of alms and charity,  
 She him instructed with great industry.  
 Shortly therein so perfect he became,  
 That from the first unto the last degree,  
 His mortal life he learned had to frame  
 In holy righteousness, without rebuke or blame.

Thenceforward by that painful way they pass  
 Forth to a hill, that was both steep and high ;  
 On top whereof a sacred chapel was,  
 Also a little hermitage thereby,  
 Wherein an aged holy man did lie,  
 Who day and night said his devotion,  
 Nor unto worldly business did apply :  
 His name was HEAVENLY CONTEMPLATION ;  
 Of God and goodness was his meditation.



Great grace that old man to him given had ;  
 For God he often saw from heaven's height :  
 Although his earthly eyes were blunt and bad,  
 And through great age had lost their kindly sight,  
 Yet wondrous quick and piercing was his sprite,  
 As eagle's eye that can behold the sun.  
 That hilt they scale with all their power and might ;  
 The knight's frail limbs, nigh weary and foredone,  
 Did fail ; by MEACRY'S help, the top at last he won.

Their they do find that godly aged sire,  
 With snowy locks adown his shoulders shed ;  
 As hoary frost with spangles doth attire  
 The mossy branches of an oak half dead.  
 Each bone might through his body well be read,  
 And every sinew seen, through his long fast ;  
 For nought he cared his carcass long unfed :  
 His mind was full of spiritual repast ;  
 He pined his flesh to keep his body low and chaste.

Who, when these two approaching he espied,  
 At their first presence grew aggrieved sore,  
 That forced him lay his heavenly thoughts aside ;  
 And had he not that dame respected more,  
 Whom highly he did reverence and adore,  
 He would not once have moved for the knight.  
 They him saluted, standing far afore ;  
 Who, well them greeting, humbly did requite,  
 And asked to what end they clomb that tedious height.

'What end,' quoth she, 'should cause us take such pain,  
 'But that same end, which every living wight  
 'Should make his mark, high heaven to attain ?  
 'Is not from hence the way, that leadeth right  
 'To that most glorious house, that glistereith bright  
 'With burning stars and ever living fire,  
 'Whereof the keys are to thy hand behight [entrusted]  
 'By wise FIDELIA ? She doth thee require  
 'To shew it to this knight, thus granting his desire.'

'Thrice happy man,' said then the father grave,  
 'Whose staggering steps thy steady hand doth lead,  
 'And shews the way his sinful soul to save !  
 'Who better can the way to heaven read [reveal]  
 'Than thou thyself, who wast both born and bred  
 'On heavenly throne, where thousand angels shine ?  
 'Thou dost the prayers of the righteous seed  
 'Present before the Majesty divine,  
 'And his avenging wrath to clemency incline.'

' Yet since thou bidd'st, thy pleasure shall be done.  
 ' Then come, thou man of earth, and see the way,  
 ' That never yet was seen by fairy's son ;  
 ' That never leads the travellers astray,  
 ' But, after labours long and sad delay,  
 ' Brings them to joyous rest and endless bliss.  
 ' But first thou must a season fast and pray,  
 ' Till from her bonds the spirit loosened is,  
 ' And have her strength recovered from frail infirmities.'

That done, he leads him to the highest mount ;  
 Such one as that same mighty man of God,  
 Who blood-red billows, like a walled front,  
 On either side disparted with his rod,  
 Till that his army passed through dry-shod,  
 Dwelt forty days upon ; where, upon stone,  
 The holy law, writ by the hand of God,  
 To sinners threatening death and baleful moan,  
 He did receive, while flashing fire about him shone :

Or like that sacred hill, whose head full high,  
 Adorned with fruitful olives all around,  
 Is, as it were for endless memory  
 Of that dear Lord who oft thereon was found,  
 For ever with a flowering garland crowned :  
 Or like that pleasant mount that is for aye, [ever]  
 Through famous poets every where renowned,  
 On which the thrice-three learned ladies play  
 Their heavenly notes, and make full many a lovely lay.

From thence, far off, he unto him did shew  
 A little path that was both steep and long,  
 Which to a goodly city led his view ;  
 Whose wall and towers were builded high and strong,  
 Of pearl and precious stone, that earthly tongue  
 Cannot describe, nor wit of man can tell ;  
 Too high a ditty for my simple song !  
 THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING named right well,  
 Wherein eternal peace and happiness do dwell.

As he thereon stood gazing, he might see  
 The blessed angels to and fro descend  
 From highest heaven, in gladsome company,  
 And with great joy into that city wend,  
 As lovingly as friend does with his friend.  
 Whereat he wondered much, and did enquire [inquire]  
 What stately building dares so high extend  
 Her lofty towers unto the starry sphere,  
 And what unknown nation therein empeopled were.

- ' Fair knight,' quoth he, ' Jerusalem that is,  
 ' The new Jerusalem that God has built  
 ' For those to dwell in who are chosen his ;  
 ' His chosen people, purged from sinful guilt,  
 ' With precious blood, which cruelly was spilt  
 ' On cursed tree, of that unspotted Lamb  
 ' Who for the sins of all the world was kilt : [killed]  
 ' Now are they saints all in that city same,  
 ' More dear unto their God than younglings to their dame.'
- ' Till now,' said then the knight, ' I weened well,  
 ' That great Cleopolis where I have been,  
 ' In which that fairest Fairy Queen doth dwell,  
 ' The fairest city was that might be seen ;  
 ' And that fair tower all built of crystal clean,  
 ' Panthea, seemed the brightest thing that was :  
 ' But now by proof all otherwise I ween,  
 ' For this great city that does far surpass,  
 ' And this bright angels' tower quite dims that tower of glass.'
- ' Most true,' then said the holy aged man ;  
 ' Yet is Cleopolis, for earthly frame,  
 ' The fairest piece that eyes behold e'er can ;  
 ' It well beseems all knights of noble name,  
 ' Who covet in the immortal book of fame  
 ' Ever to be enrolled, that same to haunt,  
 ' And do their service to that sovereign dame,  
 ' Who glory does to them for guerdon grant ;  
 ' For she is heavenly born, and heaven may justly vaunt.'
- ' And thou, fair knight, sprung out from English race,  
 ' However now accounted fairy's son,  
 ' Well worthy dost thy service, for her grace,  
 ' To aid a virgin desolate, foredone. [distressed]  
 ' But when thou famous victory hast won,  
 ' And high amongst all knights hast hung thy shield,  
 ' Thenceforth pursuit of earthly conquest shun,  
 ' And wash thy hands from guilt of bloody field :  
 ' For blood can nought but sin, and wars but sorrows, yield.'
- ' Then seek this path which I to thee presage,  
 ' Which after all to heaven shall thee send ;  
 ' Then peaceably thy painful pilgrimage  
 ' To yonder same Jerusalem do bend,  
 ' Where is for thee ordained a blessed end :  
 ' For thou, amongst those saints, whom thou dost see,  
 ' Shalt be a saint, and thine own nation's friend  
 ' And patron : thou SAINT GEORGE shalt called be,  
 ' SAINT GEORGE of merry England, the sign of victory.'

- 'Unworthy,' quoth the knight, 'of so great grace,  
 'How dare I think such glory to attain !'  
 'Those who have it attained were in like case,'  
 Quoth he, 'as wretched, and lived in like pain.'  
 'But deeds of arms, must I at last be fain,  
 'And ladies' love, to leave, so dearly bought ?'  
 'What need of arms, where peace doth aye remain,'  
 Said he, 'and battles none are to be fought ?'  
 'As for loose loves, vain are they and vanish into nought.'
- 'O let me,' quoth the knight, 'not turn again  
 'Back to the world, whose joys so fruitless are ;  
 'But let me here for aye in peace remain,  
 'Or straightway on that last long journey fare,  
 'That nothing may my present hope impair.'  
 'That may not be,' said he, 'nor may'st thou yet  
 'Forego that royal maid's bequeathed care,  
 'Who did her cause into thy hand commit,  
 'Till from her cursed foe thou have her freely quit.'
- 'Then shall I soon, quoth he, so God me grace,  
 'Abet that virgin's cause disconsolate,  
 'And shortly back return unto this place,  
 'To walk this way in pilgrim's poor estate.  
 'But now declare, old father, why of late  
 'Didst thou me name as born of English blood,  
 'Whom all a fairy's son do nominate ?'  
 'That word shall be,' said he, 'avouched good,  
 'Since not to thee is known the cradle of thy brood.'
- 'For well I wot thou spring'st from ancient race  
 'Of Saxon kings, who have with mighty hand,  
 'And many bloody battles fought in place,  
 'High reared their royal throne in British land,  
 'And vanquished those unable to withstand :  
 'From thence a fairy thee unknowing reft,  
 'As thou didst sleep in tender swaddling band,  
 'And her base elfin child there for thee left :  
 'Such, men do changelings call, so changed by fairies' theft !
- 'Thence she thee brought into this fairy land,  
 'And in a heaped furrow did thee hide ;  
 'Where thee a ploughman all unwitting found,  
 'As he his toilsome team that way did guide,  
 'And brought thee up in ploughman's state to bide,  
 'Wherefore he gave thee GEORGE to be thy name ;  
 'Till pricked with courage, and thy forces' pride,  
 'To Fairy's court thou cam'st to seek for fame,  
 'And prove thy puissant arms, as seems thee best became.'

' O holy sire,' quoth he, ' how shall I quite [repay]  
 ' The many favours I with thee have found,  
 ' Who hast my name and nation told aright,  
 ' And taught the way that does to heaven bound ?' [lead]  
 This said, adown he looked to the ground  
 To have returned, but dazzled were his eyne [eyes]  
 By passing brightness, which did quite confound  
 His feeble sense, and did exceeding shine.  
 So dark are earthly things, compared to things divine !

At last, himself when he began to find,  
 To UNA back he wished to retire,  
 Who him awaited still with pensive mind.  
 Great thanks and goodly meed to that good sire  
 He then departing gave, for his pains' hire.  
 So came to UNA, who him joyed to see ;  
 And, after little rest, did him desire  
 Of her adventure mindful for to be.  
 So leave they take of CÆLIA, and of her daughters three.

## CANTO XI.

The knight with that old dragon fights  
 Two days incessantly ;  
 The third him overthrows ; and gains  
 Most glorious victory.

The time began to wax for UNA fair  
 To think of those her captive parents dear,  
 And their much wasted kingdom to repair ;  
 Whereto when they had now approached near,  
 With hearty words her knight she gan to cheer,  
 And in her modest manner thus bespake ;  
 ' Dear knight, as dear as ever knight was dear,  
 ' Who all these sorrows suffer for my sake,  
 ' High heaven behold the tedious toil ye for me take !'  
 ' Now are we come unto my native soil,  
 ' And to the place where all our perils dwell ;  
 ' Here haunts that fiend, and does his daily spoil ;  
 ' Therefore henceforth be at your keeping well,  
 ' And ever ready for your foeman fell :  
 ' The spark of noble courage now awake ;  
 ' Yourself, excelling others, now excel ;  
 ' Your name renowned henceforth so shall ye make,  
 ' Above all knights on earth that battles undertake.'

And pointing forth, 'Lo, yonder is,' said she,  
 'The brazen tower in which my parents dear,  
 'For dread of that huge fiend, imprisoned be ;  
 'Whom I from far see on the walls appear,  
 'Which sight my feeble soul doth greatly cheer :  
 'And on the top of all I do espy  
 'The watchman, waiting tidings glad to hear ;  
 'Which, O my parents, might I happily  
 'Unto you bring, to ease you of your misery !'

With that they heard a roaring hideous sound,  
 Which all the air with terror filled wide,  
 And seemed beneath to shake the steadfast ground.  
 Full soon that dreadful dragon they espied,  
 Where stretched he lay upon the sunny side  
 Of a great hill, himself like a great hill :  
 But all so soon as he from far descried  
 Those glistening arms, which heaven with light did fill,  
 He roused himself full blithe, and hastened them until. [unto]

Then bade the knight his lady stand aloof,  
 And to a hill herself withdraw aside ;  
 From which she might behold the battle's proof,  
 And be secure from danger far descried :  
 She him obeyed, and turned a little wide.  
 Now, O thou sacred muse, most learned dame,  
 Fair child of Phœbus and his ancient bride,  
 The nurse of time and everlasting fame,  
 That warlike hands ennoblest with immortal name ;

O gently come into my feeble breast ;  
 Come gently ; not with mighty cruel rage,  
 With which the martial troops thou dost infest,  
 And hearts of greatest heroes dost enrage,  
 That nought their kindling courage may assuage :  
 Soon as thy dreadful trump begins to sound,  
 The god of war, with his fierce equipage,  
 Thou dost awake, sleep never he so sound ;  
 And scared nations dost with horror stern astound.

Fair goddess, lay that furious fit aside,  
 Till I of wars and bloody Mars do sing,  
 And British fields with blood of Pagan dyed,  
 Twixt that great Fairy Queen and Pagan king,  
 That with their horror heaven and earth did ring ;  
 A work of labour long and endless praise :  
 But now awhile let down that haughty string,  
 And to my tunes thy second tenor raise,  
 That I this man of God his godly arms may blaze.

By this the dreadful beast drew nigh to hand,  
Half flying and half footing in his haste,  
That with his largeness overspread the land,  
And made wide shadow under his huge waist,  
As mountain doth the valley overcast.  
Approaching nigh, he reared high afore  
His body monstrous, horrible, and vast ;  
Which to increase his wondrous greatness more,  
Was swoln with wrath and poison and with bloody gore.

He, over all, with brazen scales was armed,  
Like plaited coat of steel, so couched near  
That nought could pierce ; nor might his corse be harmed  
With dint of sword nor push of pointed spear ;  
Which, as an eagle, seeing prey appear,  
His feathery plumes doth rouse full rudely dight,  
So shook he, that horror was to hear :  
For, as the clashing of an armour bright,  
Such noise his roused scales did send unto the knight.

His flaggy wings, when forth he did display,  
Were like two sails, in which the hollow wind  
Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way :  
And all the quills that did his pinions bind,  
Were like main-yards with flying canvas lined ;  
With which whene'er he chose the air to beat,  
And there by force unwonted passage find,  
The clouds before him fled for terror great,  
And all the heavens stood still, amazed with his threat.

His huge long tail wound up in hundred folds,  
Does overspread his long brass-scaly back,  
Whose wreathed twists whenever he unfolds,  
And thick entangled knots adown does slack,  
Bespotted as with shields of red and black,  
It sweepeth all the land behind him far,  
And of three furlongs does but little lack ;  
And at the point two stings infixed are,  
Both deadly sharp, that sharpest steel exceed by far.

But what did steel and stings by far exceed,  
The sharpness was of his most cruel claws :  
Death was it sure, as sure as death indeed,  
Whatever thing does touch his ravenous paws,  
Or what within his reach he ever draws.  
But his most hideous head my tongue to tell  
Does tremble ; for his deep devouring jaws  
Wide gaped, like the grisly mouth of hell,  
Through which into his dark abyss all ravin fell.

And, what more wondrous was, in either jaw  
 Three ranks of iron teeth arranged were,  
 In which yet trickling blood and gobbets raw,  
 Of late devoured bodies did appear ;  
 The sight whereof bred cold congealed fear :  
 Which to increase, and all at once to kill,  
 A cloud of smothering smoke and sulphur sear [burning]  
 Out of his stinking throat forth steamed still,  
 Which all the air about with smoke and stench did fill.

His blazing eyes, like two bright shining shields,  
 Did burn with wrath and sparkled living fire :  
 As two broad beacons set in open fields  
 Send forth their flames far off to every shire,  
 And warning give that enemies conspire,  
 With fire and sword the region to invade ;  
 So flamed his eyes with rage and rancorous ire :  
 But far within, as in a hollow glade,  
 Those glaring lamps were set, that made a dreadful shade.

So dreadfully he towards him did pass,  
 Forelifting up aloft his speckled breast,  
 And often bounding on the bruised grass,  
 As for great joy to meet his new-come guest.  
 He soon began to raise his haughty crest,  
 As chafed boar his bristles doth uprear ;  
 And shook his scales, to battle ready drest,  
 Making the Redcross knight nigh quake for fear,  
 And bidding bold defiance to his foeman near.

The knight did fairly couch his steady spear,  
 And fiercely ran at him with vigorous might :  
 The pointed steel, arriving rudely there,  
 His harder hide would neither pierce nor bite,  
 But, glancing by, forth passed forward right :  
 Yet, sorely moved with that mighty push,  
 The wrathful beast about him turned light,  
 And him, so rudely passing by, did brush  
 With his long tail, that horse and man to ground did rush.

Both horse and man up lightly rose again,  
 And fresh encounter toward him address :  
 The idle stroke yet back recoiled in vain,  
 And found no place his deadly point to rest.  
 Exceeding rage enflamed the furious beast,  
 To be avenged of so great despite ;  
 For never felt his unpierceable breast  
 So wondrous force from hand of living wight ;  
 Yet had he proved the power of many a puissant knight.



Then with his waving wings displayed wide,  
Himself up high he lifted from the ground,  
And with strong flight did forcibly divide  
The yielding air, which nigh too feeble found  
Her flitting parts and element unsound,  
To bear so great a weight : he, cutting way  
With his broad sails, about him soared round ;  
At last, low stooping with unwieldy sway,  
Snatched up both horse and man, to bear them quite away.

Long he them bore above the subject plain,  
So far as bow of yew a shaft may send ;  
Till struggling strong did him at last constrain  
To let them down, before his flight did end :  
As savage hawk, presuming to contend  
With hardy fowl, above his utmost might,  
His weary talons all in vain doth spend  
To bear the prey, too heavy for his flight,  
Which, coming down to ground, doth free itself by fight.

Just so released from his gripping gross,  
The knight his pointed spear again assayed  
In his brass-plated body to emboss,  
And three men's strength unto the stroke he laid ;  
Wherewith the stiff beam quaked as afraid,  
And, glancing from his scaly neck, did glide  
Close under his left wing, then broad displayed :  
The piercing steel there wrought a wound full wide,  
That with the uncouth smart the monster loudly cried.

He cried as raging seas are wont to roar,  
When wintry storm his wrathful wreak does threat ;  
The rolling billows beat the ragged shore,  
As they the earth would shoulder from her seat ;  
And greedy gulf does gape, as he would eat  
His neighbour element in his revenge :  
Then do the blustering brethren boldly threat  
To move the world from off its steadfast henge, [hinge]  
And boisterous battle make, each other to avenge.

The steely head stuck fast still in his flesh,  
Till with his cruel claws he snatched the wood,  
And quite asunder broke : forth flowed fresh  
A gushing river of black gory blood,  
Which drowned all the land whereon he stood :  
The stream thereof would drive a water-mill :  
Treble augmented was his furious mood  
With bitter sense of his deep-rooted ill,  
That flames of fire he threw forth from his large nostril.

His hideous tail then hurled he about,  
And therewith all enrapt the nimble thighs  
Of the froth-foaming steed ; whose courage stout  
Striving to loose the knots that fast him ties,  
Himself in straiter bonds too rash implies,  
That to the ground he is perforce constrained  
To throw his rider : who did quickly rise  
From off the earth, with dirty blood bestained ;  
For that reproachful fall right foully he disdained ;

And fiercely took his trenchant blade in hand,  
With which he struck so furious and so fell,  
That nothing seemed its power could withstand :  
Upon his crest the hardened iron fell ;  
But his more hardened crest was armed so well,  
That a deep dint therein it could not make ;  
Yet, so extremely did the buff him quell,  
That from thenceforth he shunn'd the like to take,  
So when he saw them come, he did them still forsake.

The knight was wroth to see his stroke beguiled,  
And smote again with more outrageous might ;  
But back again the sparkling steel recoiled,  
And left not any mark where it did light,  
As if on adamant rock it had been pight. [placed]  
The beast, impatient of his smarting wound,  
And of so fierce and forcible despise,  
Thought with his wings to mount above the ground ;  
But his late wounded wing unserviceable found.

Then full of grief and anguish vehement,  
He loudly brayed, that like was never heard ;  
And from his wide devouring mouth he sent  
Vast flakes of fire, that, flashing on his beard,  
The knight amazed, and almost made afeard :  
The scorching flames sore singed all his face,  
And through his armour all his body seared ;  
That he could not endure so cruel case,  
But thought his arms to leave, and helmet to unlace.

Not that great champion of the antique world,  
Whom famous poet's verse so much doth vaunt,  
And hath for twelve huge labours high extolled,  
So many furies and sharp fits did haunt,  
When him the poisoned garment did enchant,  
With Centaur's blood and bloody verses charmed,  
As did this knight twelve thousand dolours daunt,  
Whom fiery steel now burned, which erst him armed ;  
What erst him goodly armed, now most of all him harmed.

Faint, weary, sore, emboiling, grieved, brent, [burnt]  
 With heat, toil, wounds, arms, smart, and inward fire,  
 That never man such mischiefs did torment ;  
 Death better were ; death did he oft desire ;  
 But death will never come when needs require.  
 Whom so dismayed when that his foe beheld,  
 He thought to suffer him no more respire,  
 And gan his sturdy tail about to weld, [wield]  
 Which struck upon the knight, and to the ground him felled.

It happened, as fair it then befell,  
 Behind his back, unknowing where he stood,  
 Of ancient time there was a springing well,  
 From which fast trickled down a silver flood,  
 Full of great virtues, and for med'cine good.  
 Erewhile, before that cursed dragon got  
 That happy land, and all with innocent blood  
 Defiled those sacred waves, it rightly hot [was called]  
 The Well of Life ; nor yet its virtues had forgot ;

For unto life the dead it could restore,  
 And guilt of sinful crimes clean wash away ;  
 Those who with sickness were infected sore,  
 It could recover ; and aged long decay  
 Renew, as one were born that very day :  
 This Siloam and Jordan did excel,  
 The English Bath, also the German Spa :  
 Nor Cephissus nor Hebrus match this well :  
 Wherein the knight o'erthrown right backward fell.

The golden Phœbus now began to steep  
 His fiery face in billows of the west,  
 And his faint steeds to bathe in ocean deep,  
 While from their daily labour they did rest ;  
 When that infernal monster, having kest [cast]  
 His weary foe into that living well,  
 Did high advance his broad discoloured breast  
 Above its wonted pitch, with countenance fell,  
 And clapped his iron wings, as victor he did dwell.

Which when the pensive UNA saw from far,  
 Great woe and sorrow did her soul affray,  
 As deeming that the sad end of the war ;  
 And did to Highest God devoutly pray  
 That feared event from her to turn away ;  
 With folded hands, and knees full lowly bent,  
 All night she watched ; nor once adown would lay  
 Her dainty limbs in her sad dreariment, [distress]  
 But praying still did wake, and waking did lament.

The morrow now gan early to appear,  
And Titan rose to run his daily race ;  
But early, ere the morrow next did rear  
Out of the sea fair Titan's dewy face,  
Up rose the gentle virgin from her place,  
And looked all about, if she might spy  
Her loved knight to move his manly pace :  
For of his safety she thought doubtingly,  
Since late she saw him fall before his enemy.

At last she saw where he upstarted brave,  
Out of the well wherein he drenched lay ;  
As eagle, fresh out of the ocean wave,  
Where he hath left his plumes all hoary gray,  
And decked himself with feathers youthful gay,  
Like new-fledged hawk, up mounts unto the skies,  
His newly budded pinions to assay,  
And marvels at himself still as he flies ;  
So now this new-born knight to battle new did rise.

Whom when the damned fiend so fresh did spy,  
No wonder that he wondered at the sight,  
And doubted whether his late enemy  
It were, or other new supplied knight.  
He now, to prove his late renewed might,  
High brandishing his bright dew-burning blade,  
Upon the crested scalp so sore did smite,  
That to the skull a yawning wound it made :  
The deadly dint his dulled senses all dismayed.

I wot not whether the revenging steel  
Were hardened with that holy water dew,  
Wherein he fell, or sharper edge did feel,  
Or his baptised hands now greater grew,  
Or other secret virtue did ensue ;  
Else never could the force of fleshly arm  
The metal in the monster's blood imbrue.  
Him till this conflict never wight could harm,  
By subtilty, nor sleight, nor strength, nor mighty charm.

The cruel wound enraged the beast so sore,  
That loud he yelled for exceeding pain ;  
A hundred ramping lions seemed to roar,  
Whom ravenous hunger did thereto constrain.  
Then did he toss aloft his stretched train,  
And therewith scourge the buxom air so sore,  
That to his force to yield the air was fain :  
Nor aught his sturdy strokes could stand before,  
Which high trees overthrew, and rocks in pieces tore.

His tail advancing high above his head,  
With sharp extended sting, the champion smote,  
And to the earth him drove, as stricken dead :  
No man would think he could to life be brought :  
The mortal sting its angry needle shot  
Quite through the shield, and in his shoulder seasd, [pierced]  
Where fast it stuck, nor could thereout be got :  
The grief thereof him wondrous sore diseased,  
Nor might his rankling pain with patience be appeased.

But yet more mindful of his honour dear,  
Than of the grievous smart which him did wring,  
From loathed soil he did him lightly rear,  
And strove to loose the far infix'd sting :  
Who, when in vain he found his struggling,  
Inflamed with wrath, his raging blade he heft, [raised]  
And struck so strongly, that the knotty string  
Of the huge tail he quite asunder cleft :  
Five joints thereof he hewed, and but the stump was left.

Heart cannot think what outrage and what cries,  
With foul sulphureous smoke and flashing fire,  
The hell-bred beast threw forth unto the skies,  
That all were overspread with darkness dire :  
Then fraught with rancour, and engorged ire,  
He thought at once him to avenge for all ;  
And gathering up himself out of the mire,  
With his uneven wings, did fiercely fall  
Upon the sun-bright shield, and seized it fast withal.

Much was the man encumbered with his hold,  
In fear to lose his weapon in the paw,  
Nor knew yet how the talons to unfold ;  
Nor harder was from Cerberus' greedy jaw  
To pluck a bone, than from the cruel claw  
To rive by strength the gripp'd gage away ;  
Thrice he assayed it from the foot to draw,  
And thrice in vain to rive it did assay :  
It booted nought to think to spoil him of his prey.

Then when he saw no power might prevail,  
His trusty sword he called to his aid,  
Wherewith he fiercely did his foe assail,  
And double blows about him stoutly laid,  
That glancing fire out of the iron played,  
As sparkles from the anvil use to fly,  
When heavy hammers on the wedge are sway'd ;  
Therewith at last he forced him to untie  
One of his grasping feet, him to defend thereby.

The other foot, fast fixed on the shield,  
 Which when no strength nor stroke could him constrain  
 To loose, nor yet the warlike pledge to yield ;  
 He smote thereat with all his might and main,  
 That nought such wondrous puissance could sustain :  
 Upon the joint the lucky steel did light,  
 And made such way that hewed it quite in twain ;  
 The paw yet missed not its minished might,  
 But hung still on the shield, as it at first was pight. [placed]

For grief thereof and devilish despite,  
 The fiend from his infernal furnace threw  
 Huge flames, that dimned all the heaven's light,  
 Enrolled in duskish smoke and brimstone blue :  
 As burning Etna, from his boiling stew,  
 Doth belch out flames, and rocks in pieces broke,  
 And ragged ribs of mountains molten new,  
 Enrapt in coal-black clouds and filthy smoke,  
 Which all the land with stench, and heaven with horror, choke.

The heat whereof and harmful pestilence  
 The knight annoyed, and forced to retire  
 A little backward for his best defence,  
 To save his body from the scorching fire,  
 Which from hell's pit the monster did expire.  
 It chanced,—Eternal God that chance did guide,—  
 As he recoiled backward, in the mire  
 His greatly wearied feeble feet did slide,  
 And down he fell, with dread of shame sore terrified.

There grew a goodly tree him fair beside,  
 Laden with fruit and apples rosy red,  
 As they in pure vermillion had been dyed.  
 Whereof great virtues over all were read ; [declared]  
 For happy life, to all who thereon fed,  
 And also life eternal, did befall :  
 Great God it planted in that blessed stead  
 With his Almighty hand, and did it call  
 The Tree of Life ; lost by our first great father's fall.

In all the world the like was nowhere found,  
 Save in that soil where all good things did grow,  
 And freely sprang out of the fruitful ground,  
 As uncorrupted nature did them sow,  
 Till that dread dragon all did overthrow.  
 Another like fair tree did grow thereby,  
 Whereof whoso did eat at once did know  
 Both good and ill : O mournful memory !  
 That tree through one man's fault hath doomed us all to die .

From that first tree forth flowed, as from a well,  
A trickling stream of balm most sovereign,  
And dainty dear, which on the ground still fell,  
And overflowed all the fertile plain,  
As it refreshed had been with timely rain :  
Life and long health that gracious ointment gave ;  
And deadly wounds could heal ; and rear again  
The deadly corse appointed for the grave :  
Into that same he fell, which did from death him save.

For nigh thereto that ever-damned beast  
Durst not approach, for he was deadly made,  
And all that life preserved did detest ;  
Yet he it often ventured to invade.  
By this the drooping day-light gan to fade,  
And yield his room to sad succeeding night,  
Who with her sable mantle gan to shade  
The face of earth, and ways of living light,  
And high her burning torch set up in heaven bright.

When gentle UNA saw the second fall  
Of her dear knight, who, weary of long fight,  
And faint through loss of blood, moved not at all,  
But lay as in a dream of deep delight,  
Besmeared with precious balm, whose virtue's might  
Did heal his wounds, and scorching heat allay ;  
Again she stricken was with sore affright,  
And for his safety did devoutly pray,  
And watch the noisome night, and wait for joyous day.

The joyous day gan early to appear,  
And fair Aurora, from the dewy bed  
Of aged Tithon, gan herself to rear,  
With rosy cheeks, as she were blushing red :  
Her golden locks, for haste, were loosely shed  
About her ears, when UNA her did mark  
Climb to her chariot, all with flowers spread,  
From heaven high to chase the cheerless dark.  
With merry note her loud salutes the mounting lark.

Then freshly up arose the doughty knight,  
All healed of his hurts and wounds so wide,  
And did himself to battle ready dight :  
Whose early foe, awaiting him beside  
To have devoured, so soon as day he spied,  
When now he saw himself so freshly rear,  
As if late fight had nought him damnified,  
He was dismayed, and gan his fate to fear ;  
Still with his wonted rage he him advanced near.

And in his first encounter, gaping wide,  
 He thought at once his foe to swallow quite,  
 And rushed upon him with outrageous pride ;  
 Who him rencountering fierce, as hawk in fight,  
 Perforce repelled back ; the weapon bright,  
 Taking advantage of the open jaw,  
 Ran through the mouth with so impetuous might,  
 That deep it pierced the darksome hollow maw,  
 And, back retired, the life-blood forth withal did draw.

So down he fell, and forth his life did breathe,  
 That vanished into smoke and clouds full swift ;  
 So down he fell, the earth him underneath  
 Did groan, as feeble so great load to lift ;  
 So down he fell, as a huge rocky clift,  
 Whose false foundation waves have washed away,  
 With dreadful poise is from the mainland rift,  
 And, rolling down, great Neptune doth dismay :  
 So down he fell, and like a heaped mountain lay.

The knight himself even trembled at his fall,  
 So huge and horrible a mass it seemed ;  
 And his dear lady, who beheld it all,  
 Durst not approach for dread which she misdeemed :  
 But yet at last, when that the direful fiend  
 She saw not stir, off-shaking vain affright,  
 She nigher drew, and saw that joyous end :  
 Then God she praised, and thanked her faithful knight,  
 Who had achieved so great a conquest by His might.

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## CANTO XII.

Fair Una to the Redcross Knight  
 Betrothed is with joy ;  
 Though false Duessa, it to bar,  
 Her false sleights does employ.

Behold, I see the haven nigh at hand,  
 To which I mean my weary course to bend :  
 Veer the main sheet, and bear up with the land,  
 The which afore is fairly to be kend, [seen]  
 And seemeth safe from storms that may offend :  
 There this fair virgin, weary of her way,  
 Must landed be, now at her journey's end :  
 There too my feeble bark awhile may stay,  
 Till merry wind and weather call her thence away.



Scarcely had Phœbus in the glooming east  
Yet harnessed his fiery-footed team,  
Nor reared above the earth his fiery crest,  
When the last deadly smoke aloft did steam,  
Which sign of last out-breathed life did seem  
Unto the watchman on the castle wall,  
Who thereby dead that baleful beast did deem,  
And to his lord and lady loud did call,  
To tell how he had seen the dragon's fatal fall.

Up rose with hasty joy and feeble speed,  
That aged sire, the lord of all that land,  
And looked forth to see if true indeed  
Those tidings were as he did understand :  
Which when most true by trial he out found,  
He bade to open wide the brazen gate,  
Which long time had been shut, and out of hond [hand]  
Proclaimed joy and peace through all his state ;  
For dead now was their foe, which them destroyed late.

Then did triumphant trumpets sound on high,  
That sent to heaven their echoing report  
Of the new joy, and happy victory  
Gainst him who had them long oppressed with tort, [wrong]  
And fast imprisoned in besieged fort.  
Then all the people, as in solemn feast,  
To him assembled with one full consort,  
Rejoicing in the fall of that great beast,  
From whose eternal bondage now they were released.

Forth came that ancient lord and aged queen,  
Arrayed in antique robes down to the ground,  
And sad habiliments, right well beseen :  
A noble crew about them waited round  
Of sage and sober peers, all gravely gowned ;  
Whom far before did march a goodly band  
Of tall young men, all able arms to sound,  
But now they laurel branches bore in hand ;  
Glad signs of victory and peace in all their land.

Unto that doughty conqueror they came,  
And him before themselves prostrating low,  
Their lord and patron loud did him proclaim,  
And at his feet their laurel boughs did throw.  
Soon after them, all dancing in a row,  
The comely virgins came, with garlands dight, [arrayed]  
As fresh as flowers in meadow green do grow,  
When morning dew upon their leaves do light ;  
And in their hands sweet timbrels all upheld on height.

And, in advance, the fry of children young  
 Their wanton sports and childish mirth did play,  
 And to the maidens' sounding timbrels sung  
 In well attuned notes a joyous lay,  
 And made delightful music all the way,  
 Until they came where that fair virgin stood ;  
 As fair Diana in fresh summer's day,  
 Beholds her nymphs enanged in shady wood ;  
 Some wrestle, some do run, some bathe in crystal flood ;

So she beheld these maidens' merriment  
 With cheerful view ; who, when to her they came,  
 Themselves unto the ground they humbly bent,  
 And her adored by honourable name,  
 Lifting to heaven her everlasting fame :  
 Then on her head they set a garland green,  
 And crowned her twixt earnestness and game :  
 Who, in her self-resemblance well beseen,  
 Did seem, such as she was, a goodly maiden queen.

And, after all, the rascal many ran,  
 Heaped together in rude rabblement,  
 To see the face of that victorious man ;  
 Whom all admired, as from heaven sent,  
 And gazed upon with gaping wonderment.  
 But when they came where that dead dragon lay,  
 Stretched on the ground in monstrous large extent,  
 The sight with idle fear did much dismay ;  
 None durst approach him nigh to touch, or once assay.

Some feared and fled ; some feared and well it feigned ;  
 One, who would wiser seem than all the rest,  
 Warned not to touch, for yet perhaps remained  
 Some lingering life within his hollow breast,  
 Or in his womb might lurk some hidden nest  
 Of many dragonettes, his fruitful seed :  
 Another said that in his eyes did rest  
 Yet sparkling fire, and bade thereof take heed :  
 Another said he saw him move his eyes indeed.

One mother there, when her fool-hardy child  
 Did come too near, and with his talons play,  
 Half dead through fear, her little babe reviled,  
 And to her gossips did in counsel say,  
 ' How can I tell but that his talons may  
 ' Yet scratch my son, or rend his tender hand ?'  
 So diversely themselves in vain they fray :  
 While some, more bold, to measure him nigh stand,  
 To prove how many acres he overspread of land.

Thus flocked all the folk him round about ;  
Then does that hoary king, with all his train,  
Being arrived where that champion stout,  
After his foe's defeat, did still remain,  
Him goodly greet, and fair does entertain,  
With princely gifts of ivory and gold,  
And thousand thanks him gives for all his pain.  
Then when his daughter dear he does behold,  
He dearly doth embrace and kisseth manifold.

Them to his palace he doth after bring,  
With sound of trumpets, and with clarions sweet ;  
And all the way the joyous people sing,  
And with their garments strow the paved street ;  
Whence mounting up, they find provision meet,  
Of all that royal prince's court became ;  
And all the floor was, underneath their feet,  
Bespread with costly scarlet of great name,  
On which they lowly sit, and fit discourse do frame.

What need to tell their feast and goodly guise,  
In which was nothing riotous or vain ?  
What need of dainty dishes to devise,  
Of comely services, or courtly train ?  
My narrow leaves cannot in them contain  
The large discourse of royal prince's state.  
Yet was their manner then but bare and plain ;  
The antique world excess and pride did hate ;  
Such proud luxurious pomp is swollen up of late.

Then when, with meats and drinks of every kind,  
Their fervent appetites they quenched had,  
That ancient lord did fit occasion find,  
Of strange adventures, and of perils sad,  
Which in his travel him befallen had,  
For to demand of his renowned guest :  
Who then, with utterance grave and aspect sad,  
From point to point as is before exprest,  
Discoursed his voyage long, according his request.

Great pleasure, mixed with pitifal regard,  
That goodly king and queen did passionate,  
While they his sorrowful adventures heard ;  
That oft they did lament his luckless state,  
And often blame the cruel doom of fate,  
That heaped on him so many wrathful wrecks ;  
For never gentle knight, as he of late,  
So teased was in fortune's cruel freaks ;  
And all the while the tears bedewed the hearers' cheeks.

Then said the royal prince, in sober wise,  
 ' Dear son, great are the evils which ye bore,  
 ' From first to last in your great enterprise ;  
 ' I know not whether praise or pity more ;  
 ' For never living man, I ween, so sore,  
 ' In sea of deadly dangers was distrest :  
 ' But since now safely ye have reached the shore,  
 ' And well arrived are, High God be blest !  
 ' Let us devise of ease and everlasting rest.'

' Ah dearest lord,' said then the doughty knight,  
 ' Of ease or rest I may not now devise ;  
 ' For, by the faith which I to arms have plight,  
 ' I bound am still, straight after this emprise,  
 ' As that your daughter can ye well advise,  
 ' Back to return to that great fairy queen,  
 ' And her to serve six years in warlike wise,  
 ' Gainst that proud Paynim king, who works her teen ; [harm]  
 ' Therefore I must crave pardon, till I there have been.'

' Unhappy falls that hard necessity'  
 Quoth he, ' that troubles now my happy peace,  
 ' And is opposed to my felicity ;  
 ' Nor I against the same can justly preace. [remonstrate]  
 ' But since that bond ye cannot now release,  
 ' Nor leave undone, for vows may not be vain,  
 ' Soon as the term of those six years shall cease,  
 ' Ye then shall hither back return again,  
 ' The marriage to accomplish, vowed betwixt you twain :'

' Which, for my part, I covet to perform ;  
 ' Because throughout the world I did proclaim,  
 ' That whoso killed that monster most deform,  
 ' And him in hardy battle overcame,  
 ' Should have mine only daughter to his dame,  
 ' And of my kingdom heir apparent be :  
 ' Therefore since now to thee pertains the same,  
 ' By due desert of noble chivalry,  
 ' My daughter and my kingdom, lo, I yield to thee.'

Then forth he called that his daughter fair,  
 The fairest UNA, only daughter dear,  
 His only daughter and his only heir ;  
 Who forth proceeding with sad sober cheer,  
 As bright as doth the morning star appear,  
 Out of the east, with flaming locks bedight,  
 To tell that dawning day is drawing near,  
 And to the world does bring long-wished light :  
 So fair and fresh that lady shewed herself in sight.

So fair and fresh, as freshest flower in May ;  
 For she had laid her mournful robe aside,  
 And that same widow's veil had thrown away,  
 Wherewith her heavenly beauty she did hide,  
 While on her weary journey she did ride ;  
 And on her now a garment she did wear  
 All lilly-white, without or spot or pride,  
 That seemed like silk and silver woven near ;  
 But neither silk nor silver did therein appear.

The blazing brightness of her beauty's beam,  
 And glorious light of her sunshiny face,  
 To tell, were as to strive against the stream ;  
 My ragged rhymes are all too rude and base  
 Her heavenly lineaments for to enchase.  
 No wonder ; for her own dear loved knight,  
 Though was she daily with himself in place,  
 Did wonder much at her celestial sight ;  
 Oft had he seen her fair, but never so fair sight. [arrayed]

So fairly clad when she in presence came,  
 She to her sire made humble reverence,  
 And bowed low, that her right well became,  
 And added grace unto her excellence ;  
 Her sire with wisdom and grave eloquence,  
 Thus gan to say :—but ere he thus had said,  
 With flying speed and seeming great pretence,  
 Came running in, much like a man dismayed,  
 A messenger with letters which his message said .

All in the open hall amazed stood,  
 So sudden was that unexpected sight,  
 And wondered at his breathless hasty mood ;  
 But he for nought would stay his passage right,  
 Till fast before the king he did alight ;  
 Where falling flat great lowliness did make,  
 And kissed the ground whereon his foot was pight ; [placed]  
 The writing in his hands the king did take,  
 Which he disclosing, read thus, as the paper spake ;

' To thee, most mighty king of Eden fair,  
 ' Her greeting sends, in these sad lines address,  
 ' The woeful daughter and forsaken heir  
 ' Of that great emperor of all the west ;  
 ' And bids thee be advised for the best,  
 ' Ere thou thy daughter link in holy band  
 ' Of wedlock, to that new and unknown guest :  
 ' For he before has plighted his right hand  
 ' Unto another love, and to another land.'

- ' To me, sad maid, or rather widow sad,  
 ' He was affianced long time before,  
 ' And sacred pledges he both gave and had,  
 ' False errant knight, infamous and forswore !  
 ' Witness ye burning altars where he swore,  
 ' And ye high heavens, his bold perjury !  
 ' Which though he hath polluted oft of yore,  
 ' Yet I to them for judgment just do fly,  
 ' And them conjure to avenge this shameful injury !'
- ' Therefore, since mine he is, or free or bond,  
 ' Or false or true, or living or else dead,  
 ' Withhold, O sovereign prince, your hasty hond [hand]  
 ' From knitted league with him, I you aread ; [advise]  
 ' Nor think my right with strength adown to tread,  
 ' Through weakness of my widowhood or woe :  
 ' For Truth is strong her rightful cause to plead,  
 ' And shall find friends, if need requireth so.  
 ' So bids thee well to fare, thy neither friend nor foe, FIDESSA.'

- When he these bitter biting words had read,  
 The tidings strange did him abashed make,  
 That still he sat long time astonished,  
 As in great muse, nor word to creature spake :  
 At last his solemn silence thus he brake,  
 With doubtful eyes fast fixed on his guest ;  
 ' Redoubted knight, who for mine only sake,  
 ' Thy life and honour late adventarest,  
 ' Let nought be hid from me, that ought to be exprest.'
- ' What mean these bloody vows and idle threats,  
 ' Thrown out from womanish impatient mind ?  
 ' What heavens ? What altars ? What enraged heats,  
 ' Here heaped up with terms of love unkind,  
 ' My conscience clear with guilty bands would bind ?  
 ' High God be witness that I guiltless am !  
 ' But if yourself, sir knight, ye faulty find,  
 ' Or wrapped be in loves of former dame,  
 ' With crime do not it cover, but disclose the same.'

- To whom the REDCROSS knight this answer sent ;  
 ' My lord, my king, be nought thereat dismayed,  
 ' Till well ye wot by grave intendiment, [understanding]  
 ' What woman, and wherefore, doth me upbraid  
 ' With breach of love, and loyalty betrayed.  
 ' It was in my mishaps, as hitherward  
 ' I lately travelled, that unawares I strayed  
 ' Out of my way, through perils strange and hard ;  
 ' That time would fail me, ere I had them all declared.'

' There did I find, or rather I was found  
 ' Of this false woman, who FIDESSA hight ; [is called]  
 ' FIDESSA called, the falsest dame on ground,  
 ' Most false DUESSA, royal richly dight, [arrayed]  
 ' Which easily inveigles weaker sight ;  
 ' Who, by her wicked arts and wily skill,  
 ' Too false and strong for earthly skill or might,  
 ' Me unawares wrought to her wicked will,  
 ' And to my foe betrayed, when least I feared ill.'

Then stepped forth the goodly royal maid,  
 And on the ground herself prostrating low,  
 With sober countenance thus to him said ;  
 ' O pardon me, my sovereign lord, to show  
 ' The secret treasons, which of late I know  
 ' To have been wrought by that false sorceress :  
 ' She, only she, it is who erst did throw  
 ' This gentle knight into so great distress,  
 ' That death him did await in daily wretchedness.'

' And now it seems that she suborned hath  
 ' This crafty messenger with letters vain,  
 ' To work new woe and unexpected scath, [mischief]  
 ' By breaking of the band betwixt us twain ;  
 ' Wherein she used hath the practised pain  
 ' Of this false footman, cloked with simpleness,  
 ' Whom, if you please for to discover plain,  
 ' Ye shall him ARCHIMAGO find, I guess,  
 ' The falsest man alive : who tries, shall find no less.'

The king was greatly moved at her speech,  
 And, all with sudden indignation fraught, [fraught]  
 Bade on that messenger rude hands to reach.  
 Full soon the guard, which in his state did wait,  
 Attacked that traitor false, and bound him strait :  
 Who seeming sorely chafed at his band,  
 As chained bear which cruel dogs do bait,  
 With idle force did feign them to withstand ;  
 And often semblance made to 'scape out of their hand.

But him they laid full low in dungeon deep,  
 And bound him hand and foot with iron chains ;  
 And with continual watch did closely keep.  
 Who then would think that, by his subtle trains, [wiles]  
 He could escape foul death or deadly pains ?  
 Thus when that prince's wrath was pacified,  
 He did renew the late forbidden banns, [bans]  
 And to the knight his daughter dear he tied,  
 With sacred rites and vows, for ever to abide.

His own two hands the holy knots did knit,  
 That none but death for ever can divide ;  
 His own two hands, for such a turn most fit,  
 The sacramental fire did then provide,  
 And holy water thereon sprinkled wide ;  
 At which the bushy torch a groom did light,  
 And sacred lamp in secret chamber hide,  
 Where it should not be quenched day nor night,  
 For fear of evil fates, but burneth ever bright.

Then did they sprinkle all the posts with wine,  
 And made great feast to solemnize that day ;  
 They all perfumed with frankincense divine,  
 And precious odours fetched from far away,  
 That all the house did sweat with great array :  
 And all the while sweet music did apply  
 Her curious skill the warbling words to play,  
 To drive away the dull melancholy ;  
 The while one sung a song of love and jollity.

During the which there was a heavenly noise  
 Heard sound through all the palace pleasantly,  
 Like as it had been many an angel's voice  
 Singing before the Eternal Majesty,  
 In their trinal triplicities on high :  
 Yet wist no creature whence that heavenly sweet  
 Proceeded, yet each one felt secretly  
 Himself thereby reft of his senses meet,  
 And ravished with rare impressions on his sprite.

Great joy was made that day of young and old,  
 And solemn feast proclaimed, throughout the land,  
 That their exceeding mirth may not be told ;  
 Suffice it here by signs to understand  
 The usual joys at knitting of love's bands.  
 Thrice happy man the knight himself did hold,  
 Possessed of his lady's heart and hand ;  
 And ever when his eye did her behold,  
 His heart did seem to melt in pleasures manifold.

Her joyous presence and sweet company,  
 In full content he there did long enjoy ;  
 Nor wicked envy, nor vile jealousy,  
 His dear delights was able to annoy :  
 Yet swimming in that sea of blissful joy,  
 He nought forgot how he before had sworn,  
 In case he could that monstrous beast destroy,  
 Unto his fairy queen back to return :  
 The which he shortly did, and UXA left to mourn.



Now strike your sails, ye jolly mariners,  
For we are come into a quiet road,  
Where we must land some of our passengers,  
And light this weary vessel of her load.  
Here she awhile will make her safe abode,  
Till she has well repaired her tackles spent,  
And wants supplied; and then again abroad  
On the long voyage whereunto she's bent!  
Well may she speed, and fairly finish her intent!

FINIS.

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